THE SOVIET-POLISH PEACE OF 1921 AND THE CREATION OF INTERWAR EUROPE

JERZY BORZĘCKI

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Jerzy Borzęcki

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Introduction

The Soviet-Polish peace treaty of 1921, which ended the war of 1919–1920, is arguably the most important Eastern European treaty of the interwar period. While one of its signatories was a great power, though temporarily weakened, the other counted as the largest of several small states that emerged in the region in the aftermath of the Great War. Also known as the "Riga peace" for the city in which it was signed, the treaty established the crucial central part of the Soviet western border, giving Eastern Europe a measure of stability which lasted until 1939. It forced Lenin to abandon hope of an immediate European revolution, and to embark on building socialism in one country. Indeed, it was Soviet military defeat, and the terms of the Riga treaty, that forced the Bolsheviks to create a clearly defined state, and determined which European nations it would contain. At the same time, the treaty forced the Polish leader Piłsudski to forgo plans for an Eastern European federation, and led to the definition of Poland as a national state. In that sense, the Riga peace is the background for important debates about Polish history and the treatment of Poland's national minorities.

The treaty was no less important to the countries traditionally associated with the historic Polish-Russian Borderlands. By signing it, Poland abandoned the idea of an independent Ukraine and officially recognized Soviet Ukraine; Belarus was cut in half by a new border; and the Soviets agreed not to interfere in the Polish-Lithuanian quarrel over Wilno,[1] virtually ensuring that the region would become Polish.

Surprisingly for such an important subject, the Riga treaty has not yet been satisfactorily explored by historians. A Soviet book on the treaty, *Rizhskii mir,*

Moscow: Nauka, 1969, by P. N. Ol'shanskii, is tendentious and based mainly on secondary sources. A Polish monograph, *Pokój polsko-radziecki 1921,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, written by Jerzy Kumaniecki, is much more objective, yet the author's access to Soviet archival sources was very limited. As a result, his treatment of some issues is rather cursory; for instance, he devotes only a few pages to the five months of negotiations leading to the definitive treaty. A classic work by Piotr Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, covers the diplomacy of the war, yet ends with the preliminary peace, without touching on the definitive treaty. Although the author shows Soviet policy for what it was, he was naturally unable at that time to get access to Soviet archives. A recent collection, edited by Mieczysław Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, includes papers presented at a scholarly conference devoted to the Soviet-Polish peace. These papers, however, deal almost exclusively with the Polish side and its allies.

The present monograph aims to show a more balanced picture of the Soviet-Polish peace, with an emphasis on the Soviet side, since it has not been yet extensively researched. It is based on a wealth of previously unknown materials which have been found in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (the former Central Party Archive), the State Archive of the Russian Federation, and the Russian Main Military Archive, all in Moscow. They allow a detailed study of Soviet approach to peace with Poland, including decision-making and the inner workings of Moscow's diplomacy. They also suggest a new interpretation of several crucial points concerning the peace negotiations at Riga and Minsk.

Archival materials relating to the Polish side have been found in Warsaw's Archive of New Records, Central Military Archive, and Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences; Moscow's Center for the Preservation of Historico-Documentary Collections (the so-called Trophy Archive, holding materials plundered by the Red Army during World War II); and New York's Józef Piłsudski Institute. The study also uses numerous recent collections of documents, including *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920: Ranee ne opublikovannye dokumenty i materialy,* Moscow: RAN ISiB, 1994, edited by I. I. Kostiushko, and *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, edited by Richard Pipes.

The main argument is that the Riga peace was concluded on the basis of compromise. However picayune such a thesis may sound, in fact the treaty is often thought of as having been imposed by Poland. To appreciate the nature of the settlement, the monograph places it within the broad context of the

Soviet-Polish war of 1919–1920 and its changing fortunes. Special attention is paid to the historic Borderlands and their peoples, especially Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians. As a result of an in-depth treatment, it is possible to disprove certain myths entrenched in the historiography (for instance, that the Soviet peace delegation at Riga offered the Poles Minsk, only to be turned down). The study addresses several issues that have been subject to emotional dispute in Eastern Europe, such as the goals of Polish and Soviet commanders and peace delegations, the treatment of prisoners of war on both sides, and the exploitation of the nations "in between," the Ukrainians and Belarusians.

While centering on Soviet-Polish relations, the monograph seeks to contribute not only to a better understanding of the history of the two countries but also to that of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Latvia. By covering some important aspects of Soviet and Polish relations with the Entente, it gives insights into diplomatic relations between Western and Eastern Europe. Last but not least, it is a case study of the mode of negotiations between an emerging totalitarian state and a fledgling democracy.

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CHAPTER 1

Early Diplomatic Contacts

The Borderlands and Their Inhabitants

The diplomatic and military struggle of 1919–1920 between the recently reestablished Poland and the still new Bolshevik government in Soviet Russia centered on the lands between them, the historic Polish-Russian Borderlands. These are usually understood to be the territories between Poland proper and Russia proper. In this work, the Borderlands will be specifically understood as identical to the Westland,[1] or *Zapadnyi krai,* of the Russian Empire. The Westland was a separate administrative unit made up of territories acquired by Russia in the partitions of Poland (1772–1795).[2] It was subdivided into two parts: the Southwestland, with its capital in Kiev, consisted of the provinces of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia, while the Northwestland, with its capital in Wilno, encompassed the provinces of Kaunas, Wilno, Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev.

These same territories were known to Poles as the Eastern Borderlands, or *Kresy Wschodnie.* They had been part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or *Rzeczpospolita,* from the Polish-Lithuanian union of 1569 until the partitions.[3] The Southwestland used to belong to Crown Poland,[4] while the boundaries of the Northwestland were nearly identical to those of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, also known as historic Lithuania.

The Borderlands, then, were inhabited by several national or ethnic groups, particularly Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Jews, Poles, and Russians. The Southwestland was populated mainly by Ukrainians, the only exception being the city of Kiev, where Russians were a majority. A more complicated situation existed in the Northwestland. Belarusians

predominated unquestionably in the provinces of Minsk and Mogilev, and were a majority in Vitebsk Province, with the notable exception of its northwestern part, Latgalia. This area, which included the counties of Daugavpils, Rezekne, and Ludza, was inhabited mostly by Latvians.[5] Lithuanians predominated in Kaunas Province. Jews, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly urban-based, owing to Tsarist Russia's restrictive laws preventing them from settling in the countryside; therefore, they did not form a majority in any particular area of the Borderlands, but made up a significant proportion of the population in every urban settlement.

As for the provinces of Wilno and Grodno, there was no agreement on which nationality was the most populous. The Russians claimed it was Belarusians, while the Poles claimed to be more numerous in Wilno Province, and more or less tied with Belarusians in Grodno Province. In fact, these two provinces contained a large number of peasants who spoke both Polish and Belarusian.

According to the Russian view, local Poles belonged chiefly to the nobility and gentry. Indeed, the Tsar's decree of 10 December 1865 pronounced that the Borderlands' Polish population, even though it gave "the whole territory a Polish character," was "tiny" and consisted "mainly of landowners."[6] The administration's anti-Polish policies in the area were officially interpreted as "protecting the Russian [that is, Belarusian and Ukrainian] peasant" from the pernicious influence of Poles.[7] Teaching Polish to peasants and peasant possession of Polish books were punishable offenses.[8] Thus, by definition, the local peasants could not be Polish, and hence those peasants who were bilingual, Polish-Belarusian or Polish-Ukrainian, were officially held to be Belarusian or Ukrainian—in other words, Russian.

This view is supported by the first and only general census of the Russian Empire, carried out in 1897,[9] which showed Poles in significant numbers only in a handful of places within the Borderlands. According to this census, in Grodno Province, Poles were a plurality in Białystok County and were tied for plurality with Ukrainians in Bielsk County. In Wilno Province, they formed significant minorities[10] in Kaunas County and the city of Wilno.

According to the Polish view, those Catholic peasants of the Borderlands who were bilingual, Polish-Belarusian or Polish-Ukrainian, were, in fact, Polish. They were disinclined, however, to advertise their Polishness in a region where Poles were treated as "the most dangerous foe," and subjected to a whole range of special restrictive measures "in complete accord with the government's continued efforts to destroy Polish influence in the area," as one tsarist governor general of Wilno put it.[11] Nonetheless, the Polish-Belarusian speakers of Catholic faith, in Tsarist Russia officially termed Catholic Belarusians, were

in complete solidarity with the Polish population. They voted for Polish candidates, had underground Polish schools, and maintained stronger ties with their Polish than their Belarusian Orthodox neighbors. For that reason, the Russian government treated them equally with Poles as far as any practical implementation was concerned, counting them as Russians only for statistical purposes.[12]

This view is supported by both the German census of 1916 and the Polish census of 1919, which indicated that there was a Polish ethnic territory stretching from the river Narew to the river Dvina. This strip included the cities and regions of Białystok, Grodno, and Wilno, thus dividing the Belarusian and Lithuanian ethnic territories. In Grodno Province, Poles predominated in the counties of Sokółka and Białystok, and in the western half of Bielsk County. They also constituted a plurality in the county of Grodno, and a significant minority in Wołkowysk County. In Wilno Province, Poles were an absolute majority in the counties of Lida, Oszmiana, Wilno, and Święciany, and formed a significant minority in the remaining counties of Troki, Wilejka, and Dzisna. The city of Wilno itself was more or less split between its Polish and Jewish inhabitants. Moreover, Poles made up a significant minority in the counties of Kaunas and Zarasai of Kaunas Province; Drissa and Daugavpils of Vitebsk Province; and in the county of Minsk. In the Southwestland, Polish inhabitants formed a significant minority in Proskurov County of Podolia.[13]

Every Borderlands nationality had co-nationals in adjacent territories. Ukrainians were a majority in the Russian-ruled provinces which stretched to the east and south of the Southwestland: Chernigov, Poltava, Khar'kov, Ekaterinoslav, Kherson', and Tavrida (without the Crimea). All these provinces, with the exception of Poltava, also had a significant Russian minority, and, together with the Southwestland, were collectively known as Dnieper Ukraine.

Ukrainians also predominated in the eastern half of Galicia, a province of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Ukrainian national movement was unusually strong here, while it remained much weaker in the rest of Ukraine. Having enjoyed far-reaching civil liberties and the rule of law under Austria, East Galicia's inhabitants had been able to develop their own political parties and cultural organizations, along with a Ukrainian educational system, press, and cooperative movement.[14] Such things were unthinkable in Russian-ruled Dnieper Ukraine. Another difference between the Ukrainian national movement in East Galicia and Dnieper Ukraine was that the former pursued purely nationalist aims, treating social revolution with circumspection, while the latter fought for both goals. Moreover, the Dnieper Ukrainians naturally saw Russia as the greatest adversary of the Ukrainian cause, while the East Galicians gave this distinction emphatically to Poland.

Indeed, Galicia was rent by a long-standing Polish-Ukrainian feud. Poles, as the majority,[15] wanted the entire province included in a Polish state. Ukrainians, predominating in East Galicia, demanded separation from the rest of Galicia along the river San, wanting it to become part of a Ukrainian state. This would mean, however, that 2 million Polish speakers would be cut off from Poland.[16] The same fate would befall Lwów, the capital of Galicia, known, in the half-century preceding the Great War, as the most important center of Polish culture, greater even than Warsaw or Cracow.[17] The Polish-Ukrainian conflict in East Galicia became a full-fledged war after an attempt at a unilateral military takeover of Lwów by Ukrainian troops on 1 November 1918. The war ended in July 1919, when the Polish Army forced Ukrainian troops out of East Galicia.

Ukrainian inhabitants were also present in Congress Poland or *Kongresówka*. Originally established at the Vienna Congress of 1815 as a rump Polish state and a constitutional monarchy tied to Tsarist Russia by personal union, it was forcibly incorporated into the autocratic Russian Empire in 1831. Ukrainians formed a significant minority in the so-called Chełm region, being a plurality in two of its eleven counties, and a significant minority in four others.[18] The region was given to Ukraine by the first Brest-Litovsk treaty of 9 February 1918,[19] causing much indignation among Poles. Poland reacquired it soon after regaining independence in the fall of that year. Another significant minority within Congress Poland were Lithuanians, who predominated in the greater part of Suwałki Province, while Poles were a majority only in the southernmost counties of Suwałki and Augustów and in half of Sejny County.

Besides Latgalia, Latvians predominated in Courland and in most of Livonia. Finally, the Belarusian-inhabited territories extended beyond the Northwestland's boundaries only in the provinces of Smolensk and Chernigov. In each of them, Belarusians commanded a majority in one county.[20]

First Diplomatic Contacts

The basic precondition of any negotiation is naturally a modicum of trust between the negotiating parties. This is especially true in international relations. As Adol'f A. Ioffe, the outstanding Soviet diplomat and negotiator, aptly explained to the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party, "obviously, there can be no guarantees [attached to any international agreement] because any obligation can be broken at any time."[21] From that point of view, Polish-Soviet relations were not at all promising in the fall of 1918, as there was precious little, if any, trust between the two sides.

This lack of trust was in part a result of the long-standing animosity between Poles and Russians. On the one hand, the traditional Polish stereotype

of a Russian emphasized such characteristics as "uncouth, primitive, unpredictable, and treacherous." On the other hand, the deeply ingrained Russian stereotype of a Pole underlined such qualities as "superficial, treacherous, and sly."[22] While Poles had not yet forgotten the long list of Tsarist Russia's broken agreements relating to Poland, Russians historically regarded the Polish people as recklessly rebellious. It was also of some significance that a "profound aversion toward Russia appeared to be one of the main features of the political world view" of Józef Piłsudski[23] who was both Chief of State of the reestablished Poland and the commander in chief of its budding armed forces.

Even more reason for distrust, however, resulted from the new Soviet Russian government's employment of a revolutionary version of diplomacy. This "demonstrative diplomacy," as the Bolsheviks called it, "was designed not to promote freely accepted and mutually profitable agreement as between governments, but rather to embarrass other governments and to stir up opposition among their own people."[24] While such diplomacy may have been an effective way of spreading revolutionary attitudes around the world, it nonetheless engendered profound distrust toward Soviet Russia among other governments.

This problem was further exacerbated by the Bolshevik "fundamental policy" of using "every opportunity to go from the defense to the offense."[25] The policy, combined with the perception of any agreement with "bourgeois governments as merely a breathing spell, based on the consideration of the correlation of forces at a given moment,"[26] led some Bolsheviks to act offensively even when Moscow, for tactical reasons, preferred to remain temporarily on the defense. This tendency exasperated the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Georgii V. Chicherin, who warned the Soviet leader, Vladimir I. Lenin, that faced by mixed signals arising from the lack of coordination between defensive and offensive actions, other governments "are not going to believe one word of ours."[27] The problem was acknowledged by Lenin himself when he complained at a Party conference that "it has been repeatedly confirmed . . . that precisely [because of] the fact that our new diplomacy is entirely unconventional, unanticipated, and unprecedented in the history of the monarchical and bourgeois states, it can in no way as yet be accepted by other countries. When [we] the Bolsheviks make straightforward statements, literally no one in a single country is capable of understanding that we are really conducting diplomacy on the basis of open statements."[28]

At the same time, the Bolshevik leadership, itself waging an uncompromising and most determined struggle against the capitalist world, tended to assume that "bourgeois" governments were equally bent on annihilating Soviet Russia. Thus, no real compromise or permanent accommodation could

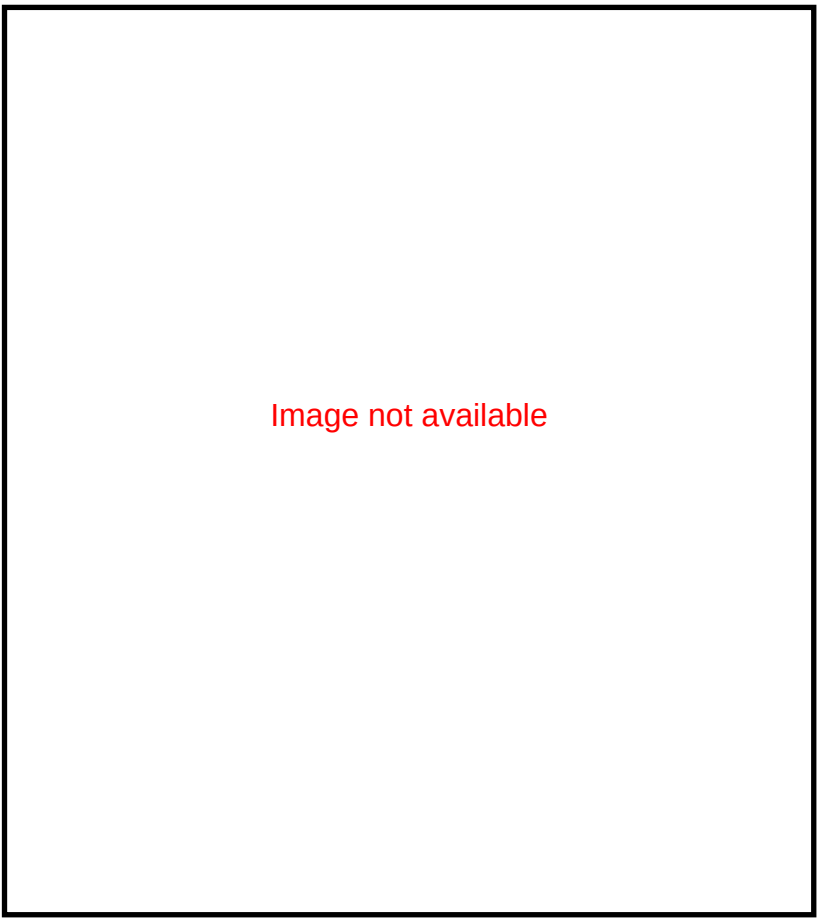

FIG. 1. Vladimir I. Lenin, the Soviet leader, at his desk. AVPRF.

ever be reached, because, as Chicherin put it, "our regime is incompatible with theirs."[29] Accordingly, the Bolsheviks believed that "bourgeois" governments regarded, conversely, any agreement with Soviet Russia "as merely a breathing spell, based on the consideration of the correlation of forces at a given moment."[30] In particular, Moscow viewed the Entente as its mortal and uncompromising enemy. The smaller "bourgeois" republics, including Poland and the Baltic states, were seen by the Bolsheviks as fully subordinate to the Entente and almost always acting on its orders. Therefore, any move of such a state, unless it was completely transparent, was treated with extreme suspicion.

Reestablished or "reborn" Poland, having to build its diplomatic services from scratch, was likewise deeply distrustful of Soviet Russia. This lack of trust can be seen throughout the entire period of negotiations, although it was

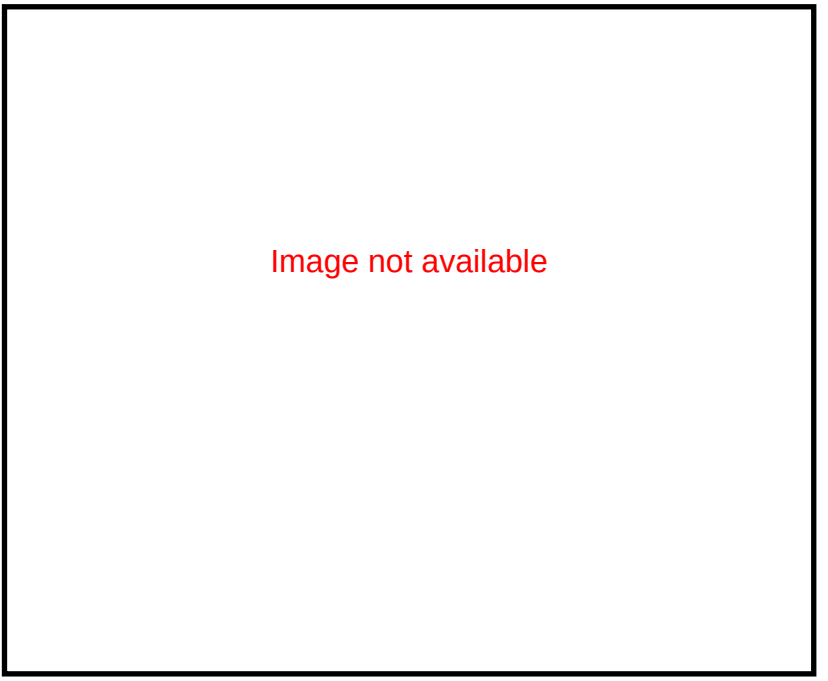

FIG. 2. Georgii V. Chicherin, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, at his desk, 1919. S. Zarnitskii and A. Sergeev, *Chicherin,* Moscow: TsK VLKSM, 1966.

probably at its most acute in the fall of 1918, when the newly formed Polish Foreign Ministry faced a Soviet diplomacy which already had acquired considerable skill and experience. The Poles doubtless knew that at the Brest-Litovsk peace conference of December 1917–March 1918, the Soviet negotiators had left the impression of being extraordinarily provocative and deceitful.[31] At the same time, while they may not have heard Lenin's exhortation that the Bolsheviks ought to support their temporary allies "the way a rope supports the neck of a hanged man,"[32] they were certainly familiar with Bolshevik practice of temporary alliances.

It was in this atmosphere of profound mutual distrust and aversion that direct diplomatic contacts between Poland and Soviet Russia began. Almost immediately, a singularly unpromising note was struck, when, in November 1918, the entire personnel of the Polish legation in Soviet Russia was arrested by the Soviets and its buildings, property, and archives were seized.[33] The legation had been originally established by the Regency Council in Warsaw, acting as a quasi-government of German-occupied Poland until it turned over all its authority to Piłsudski on 11–14 November. Chicherin justified the seizure as

an independent act of the local Polish refugees, who viewed the legation as "an organ of the German occupation authorities . . . having nothing in common with the Polish people."[34] Soviet Russia, he maintained, had no obligation to guarantee the inviolability of the legation, since Moscow had never recognized the Regency Council. All of this naturally made an extremely bad impression on the Poles, not least because Chicherin had de facto recognized the Regency Council as the government of Poland, asking it to establish diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia in a note of 29 October 1918 sent to the Moscow legation.[35]

About a month later, another event further strained the already bad relations between the two states, and increased mutual suspicions. In late December, an ostensible mission of the Soviet Russian Red Cross, most of whose members were high-ranking Bolsheviks not known for any connection with the Red Cross,[36] arrived in Warsaw without the Polish government's permission. It was quickly interned and sent under an escort to the town of Łapy on the border of Congress Poland, from where it was supposed to travel back to Russia. The bodies of four members of the mission were subsequently found near Łapy, while the only surviving member blamed the escort for the murder. The official communiqué of the Polish Foreign Ministry assured that the assassination occurred after the escort had seen off the mission, and suggested that they may have been robbed and murdered on their way back to Warsaw by "one of the bands of malefactors who prowl presently on our eastern frontier." The ministry was subsequently greatly embarrassed, when an investigation by Polish authorities revealed that it was the Polish military gendarmerie in Łapy who murdered the Bolsheviks.[37]

The Outbreak of War

With the signing of the armistice in the west on 11 November 1918 it became clear that, having lost the Great War, German troops in the Borderlands would be returning home.[38] Accordingly, two days later, Soviet Russia renounced the treaty of Brest-Litovsk with all its territorial clauses. The operational plan for a military takeover of the Borderlands had already been prepared by Supreme Commander Ioakim I. Vatsetis in October 1918.[39] The Bolsheviks firmly believed that the Western democracies were on the brink of collapse and, in particular, that the current revolutionary situation in Germany was developing into a civil war, similar to the one in Russia.[40] Therefore, the prime objective of this military operation was to reach the border of Germany, allowing Soviet Russia to give effective support to the German revolutionary movement. The nearest German territory was East Prussia, and the shortest route from Moscow led through

northern Belarus, Latgalia, and Lithuania. Accordingly, Lev D. Trotsky, the People's Commissar of War, pointed out on 18 November 1918 that "the way through Pskov and Wilno leads to a direct contact with the revolution in Germany." This statement reveals the main immediate objective of the Red Army on the Soviet Western Front.

At the same time, the Bolsheviks intended to take control of all the Borderlands, and indeed all the territories of the former Russian Empire, which would now be evacuated by German troops. Naturally, the Bolshevik leadership, being a de facto government of Russia, viewed this merely as regaining what had been Russian before the Great War. Moreover, from a strictly practical point of view, the advance of Bolshevik troops to the west was necessary to prevent forces inimical to the Soviets from organizing in the evacuated territories.[41] The Bolsheviks therefore initially assumed that the Red Army would not stop until reaching the territories on the Vistula—that is, the heart of Congress Poland.[42] Accordingly, the code name of the entire military operation was "Target Vistula."[43]

In mid-November 1918, the Western Army was created out of the Western Defense Region with its headquarters in Smolensk. It was given the task of taking first Belarus and Lithuania, thus reaching the East Prussian border, and subsequently moving into Poland. One of its divisions, known as Western Rifle Division, was composed largely of Poles. Its regiments named for provinces of Congress Poland, such as Warsaw, Lublin, and Siedlce, the division was meant to be the foundation of the future "Polish revolutionary armed forces."[44] The remaining divisions consisted overwhelmingly of ethnic Russians. Initially, the Western Army counted only about 10,000 effectives[45] but it was steadily built up and by the end of December 1918 totaled 19,000, while by February 1919 its strength had risen to 49,000.[46] These Bolshevik troops began their advance on 17 November, took over Minsk on 11 December, and continued on to Wilno.

This small army was able to advance mainly because the second-line German units facing it, although stronger in numbers and more battleworthy, were content to withdraw from the area and go home now that the Great War was over. Thus, the Germans offered no resistance except sporadic rifle fire to keep overkeen Bolsheviks from moving too close to them. Thanks to good relations with soldiers' councils in the German Army, the Bolsheviks were able to buy from the withdrawing units large stores of weapons and war materiel.[47] Their withdrawal, however, was fairly slow and gradual, as they had to cover the evacuation of their colleagues from Ukraine, where German forces were being severely harassed by local guerillas. The main railroad line by which troops were being withdrawn from Ukraine led from Kowel through Brest-Litovsk

and Białystok to Grajewo on the East Prussian border (see Map 1). It was crucial for the Germans to maintain complete control of the railroad to ensure the timely withdrawal, and thus the very safety of these troops. As a result, the Polish Army, then forming in Poland proper, was barred from entering the Borderlands. While the Red Army approached Wilno, Poles frantically tried to organize some means of defense for the region, which they considered ethnically Polish.

Indeed, for about four decades after the third and final partition of Poland (1795), the leading center of Polish culture was Wilno. Its Polish university was founded in 1578 by King Stefan Bathory and closed down in 1832 by the tsarist authorities.[48] One of the university's alumni was Adam Mickiewicz, the greatest Polish poet and one of the leaders of the Polish independence movement, enjoying a prophet-like status among his own and subsequent generations of Poles. From the regions of Wilno and Grodno came also other giants of Polish culture, such as the father of Polish national opera, Stanisław Moniuszko; the most prolific Polish novel writer ever, Józef I. Kraszewski; and the first generally recognized Polish female writer, Eliza Orzeszkowa. The Polish leader, Józef Piłsudski, himself considered Wilno his home city. Finally, even the Russian general census of 1897, marked by a heavy anti-Polish bias, revealed that the number of Poles inhabiting the city was 15 times that of Lithuanians and 7.5 times that of Belarusians.[49] The more even-handed German partial census of 1916 showed Poles to be clearly and consistently the most numerous among all local nationalities, whether in the city itself (53 percent), the Wilno census district (91 percent), or the entire Wilno census region (50 percent).[50]

To be sure, there resided in the city a government of Lithuania, thanks to "the patronage of the German authorities."[51] This government, however, was completely unable to organize defense of the region inhabited mostly by Poles who had never accepted its authority. The Lithuanian Ministry of Defense was unable to recruit any soldiers, even for guarding the State Treasury containing the German loan of 10 million marks.[52] In the face of imminent German withdrawal and Bolshevik arrival, local Poles decided to take the region's defense into their own hands, counting on the support of their compatriots in Poland proper. During the months of November and December 1918, underground formations of *Samoobrona,* or Self-Defense, were spontaneously created in Wilno and in a great number of smaller localities in the region.[53] There being no shortage of volunteers, the difficulty lay in getting them weapons. Their commander, General Władysław Wejtko, realizing that these forces would not be able to hold out for long against regular Bolshevik troops, traveled in early December to Warsaw with a plea for help. Indeed, Piłsudski officially confirmed

General Wejtko in his post, gave him substantial funds, and promised to do his best to send Polish regulars to Wilno as soon as possible. Soon thereafter, Captain Zygmunt Klinger, Piłsudski's special envoy, came to Wilno to become the Self-Defense's chief of staff.[54]

At about the same time, the Polish government conducted negotiations with the German envoy in Warsaw, Count Harry Kessler, on letting Polish regular troops through to Wilno. He agreed in principle to the Polish request, and a mixed commission began working out technical details of this operation.[55] The next day, however, 15 December, the government demanded that Kessler leave Warsaw immediately. This move was intended to assure the suspicious Entente that Poland was not a German puppet state, as Warsaw suddenly realized that Poland's very future would be decided in Paris, while Berlin could only influence that of Wilno. Nonetheless, the issue of relieving the city was now in limbo. In an attempt to save the situation, the Polish General Staff sent its envoy, Captain Olgierd Górka, to the commander of German forces in the east, General Max Hoffmann, residing at Kaunas. He was sympathetic but could not act without his government's approval.[56] On 27 December, however, Captain Górka received a negative reply from the government in Berlin.[57]

Two days later, in a last desperate attempt to stave off an imminent Bolshevik takeover of the city, Leon Wasilewski, the Polish foreign minister, sent a note to Chicherin pointing out that "a part" of Belarus and Lithuania "is indisputably Polish." Hence, its "invasion" by the Soviets would "encroach directly upon the vital interests of the Polish nation." Should this happen, the Polish government "will be forced to defend . . . by force of arms the integrity of the territories inhabited by the Polish nation."[58] Warsaw thus let Moscow know that a takeover of Wilno would be considered a casus belli. To impress further upon the Bolsheviks that by taking the region they were entering into a war with Poland, the Self-Defense was dissolved on 29 December, and all its members were formally enlisted into the Polish Army. Troops preparing to defend Wilno were organized into one infantry and one cavalry regiment.[59] They were directly subordinated to the General Staff in Warsaw.[60]

All of this, however, failed to impress Moscow. On 1 January 1919, the first skirmishes took place between the approaching Bolshevik troops and Polish cavalry east of the city.[61] At the same time, the last trains were leaving with the German garrison and the Lithuanian government. Polish troops were thus left in charge of Wilno. During the first two days of January, over a thousand Polish inhabitants volunteered to defend their city.[62] Nonetheless, the two Polish regiments, having neither machine guns nor artillery, and with only about half their soldiers armed at all, could not hold out for long against two Soviet

divisions. Late on 5 January, having received information from Warsaw that relief would not be coming, and facing a shortage of ammunition, the Polish staff decided to withdraw from the city. Subsequently, the infantry regiment, after being disarmed, was allowed to cross through German-held territory into Congress Poland, where it joined the so-called Lithuanian-Belarusian Division. The cavalry regiment, led by Major Władysław Dąbrowski, decided to continue fighting in the forests south of the river Niemen. In early February, they joined Polish troops under General Antoni Listowski, advancing into the area from Congress Poland.[63]

In the meantime, the Bolsheviks were reassessing their plans of advancing into Poland. That their two divisions had needed several days merely to push out of Wilno two Polish regiments, and this without causing them any serious harm, made this goal appear less than realistic. The Soviets had now realized the inadequacy of their military forces on the Western Front. In early February 1919, Adol'f Ioffe, in his role of Moscow's chief overseer in Wilno, so reported to Trotsky on a leading detachment on this front: "The so-called Lithuanian Division (formerly the Pskov Division) makes an equally depressing impression as all the other units here. Units pillage, and are depraved in the extreme; the officers, with the exception of the commander, formerly General, Ol'derogge, are good for nothing, all of them Black Hundred types and very drunk. Commissars are little boys; they do nothing, being apparently afraid to correct, but in part because they are sufficiently depraved themselves and in drinking bouts as well as pursuit of speculation do not at all lag behind those whom they are supposed to correct. . . . There is almost no communication with Smolensk, the Front staff, and the military district staff. . . . Here, they implore for sending machine guns and at least one heavy artillery battery and two light ones." Overall, Ioffe doubted whether it was possible "to make a genuine army out of this zero, and sometimes even a negative quantity, which is now called the Army of Lithuania and Belarus." Nonetheless, he concluded, "the present forces operating against us in Lithuania are not at all dangerous; however, one needs to be very serious about the growing Polish forces."[64]

Congress Poland had originally been marked as the next destination on the Western Front's itinerary. Accordingly, on 3 January 1919, the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of Poland, intended to be the future Polish government, met for the first time.[65] Soon thereafter, the Polish Communists at the Western Front began to work on expanding the Western Rifle Division. However, the Red Army capture of Wilno caused a surge of nationalism among Poland's workers and peasants, fearing that Soviet Russia was bent on recreating a Russian empire. The Communists based in Poland advised now that if Bolshevik troops

entered the country, the masses would view them "not as 'class allies' but as 'invaders.'"[66] This, of course, would effectively kill the idea of revolution in this traditionally anti-Russian country. From that point of view, Moscow no longer believed in the expediency of such an invasion. Moreover, it appeared that an invasion was likely to result in a difficult and aggravating war. Chicherin in particular warned against "creating for ourselves another new front," as he believed that an open war could still be averted, despite the Polish quasi-declaration of war.[67] Most importantly, Trotsky's opinion, as the People's Commissar of War, was sought on the "feasibility" of his troops invading Poland.[68] His answer, apparently negative, given the weakness of Bolshevik troops on the Western Front and the growing strength of Polish forces, settled the issue.

Having thus dropped the plans for a subsequent invasion of Poland, the Bolsheviks focused on finishing their primary task of reaching the East Prussian border. On 13 February 1919, Soviet troops crossed the river Niemen at Alytus, intending to turn northwards and cut off Kaunas from East Prussia. In the ensuing battle, however, they were soundly defeated by German forces, newly assembled from volunteers. These German troops were far superior to the Bolsheviks, thanks to their excellent organization and effective use of artillery. In view of this superiority, defeatism began to spread among the Bolshevik troops, as many Russians no longer saw any reason for what they called "defending" Lithuania. In the wake of the Soviet defeat at Alytus it became clear that the Red Army was unable to advance any further.[69]

Meanwhile, Warsaw was trying to show that Wasilewski's declaration of 29 December, about defending "by force of arms the integrity of the territories inhabited by the Polish nation,"[70] had not been just a bluff. Just five days after the Soviet takeover of Wilno, the chief of the Polish General Staff, General Stanisław Szeptycki, argued that Poland must concentrate all its forces against the Bolsheviks within just two weeks.[71] On 5 February 1919, a Polish-German agreement was signed, allowing Polish troops to cross the line Kowel—Brest-Litovsk—Białystok, while Grodno and Suwałki still remained under exclusive German occupation (see Map 1).[72] Deployed against the Soviet Western Army, now renamed the Army of Belarus and Lithuania, these troops were divided into two army corps. The corps led by General Wacław Iwaszkiewicz operated east of Białystok, while the one under General Listowski was active east of Brest-Litovsk. The first battle took place on 17 February, when the Wilno cavalry regiment under Major Dąbrowski, which had joined the Listowski corps, took eighty Bolsheviks prisoner at Bereza Kartuska (see Map 2).[73] This skirmish is usually thought to be the beginning of the Polish-Soviet war, and it was so interpreted at the time by Moscow.

From Warsaw's point of view, however, it was simply a continuation of the war begun by the Soviets on 1 January.

The two Polish corps thus clashed with the Soviet Western Army, whose objectives were Brest-Litovsk and Grodno, just east of Congress Poland.[74] The Poles, all of them volunteers, were well motivated and commanded. By contrast, the Bolsheviks appeared to be poorly led and much less motivated, notwithstanding a visit paid by Trotsky himself in Baranowicze in mid-March 1919.[75] This is hardly surprising, given that most of them were conscripts, and the majority of their officer corps, hailing from the tsarist army, fought on the Soviet side under duress. Moreover, some Polish regiments of the Western Rifle Division wavered in the face of their compatriots. Two of these regiments mutinied behind the front line, in the area between Wilno and Lida.[76] To make matters worse, a large-scale mutiny of several regiments festered for a long time in Gomel'.[77] Overall, the situation at the front was quite aptly characterized by a Soviet radio message, intercepted by Polish troops: "The Poles are advancing—boys, don't be afraid."[78] No wonder that, despite the Bolsheviks being not only more numerous but also better armed and equipped,[79] the Poles were able to push them back, taking a significant number of prisoners. General Iwaszkiewicz took Słonim on 2 March, and General Listowski captured Pińsk three days later.[80] During the following month, the front line stabilized, as the Polish advance was temporarily stopped by muddy roads and significant Soviet forces defending Baranowicze and Lida.

Soviet National Republics in the Borderlands

During its advance into the Borderlands in late 1918 and early 1919, the Red Army not only took possession of the territory but also organized Soviet power in the region.[81] This was usually done by setting up a Soviet government outside a certain national territory and then having it installed in the capital by the Red Army. At the end of November 1918, Lenin instructed Supreme Commander Vatsetis that the establishment of "proletarian," that is Bolshevik, governments prior to the planned invasion would "deprive the chauvinists of Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia of the possibility of treating the offensive of our troops as an occupation." The early establishment of such governments was necessary, since without them the local "population would not treat [the advancing Soviet armies] as liberators."[82]

Accordingly, the government of Soviet Lithuania was created on 8 December in Soviet-held Daugavpils in Latgalia, and then installed in Wilno once the city was taken by the Red Army on 5 January 1919. It was headed by V. S.

Mitskevich-Kapsukas, a Lithuanian Bolshevik. Soviet Russia had already officially recognized Soviet Lithuania on 22 December.[83]

The Bolsheviks were faced with a rather more complicated situation in Minsk, where the Belarusian Rada, or council, had proclaimed a Belarusian People's Republic in late March 1918.[84] While the German occupiers never recognized this new creation, they nonetheless allowed the Rada to conduct educational and cultural activity in the Minsk region.[85] In mid-November 1918, the head of the Rada, Anton Lutskevich, was invited to Moscow for talks. While these talks failed to bring any result, it was agreed that they would be continued in Minsk, following the German withdrawal.[86] However, when Red Army troops entered the city on 11 December 1919, they only found some minor members of the Rada. Lutskevich with the rest of the Rada had already moved to German-occupied Grodno, having no desire to test Lenin's guarantees of safety. Once in Grodno, the Rada protested against the Bolsheviks' denying Belarus the right to self-determination. At the same time, Foreign Minister Wasilewski protested against "the aggressiveness and imperialism of the Soviet Russian government."[87] These accusations could not be easily refuted, since the Minsk Soviet—headed by Aleksandr F. Miasnikov, a Russified Armenian—proclaimed "in Russian, Polish, and Yiddish [but not in Belarusian], the annexation of Belarus" to Soviet Russia.[88]

This annexation was apparently caused by the lack of trustworthy and able Belarusian Bolsheviks.[89] Yet, in view of hostile propaganda and especially Polish claims to certain territories in the Northwestland, Lenin preferred that Poland "be in conflict with buffers," such as Soviet Belarus or Soviet Lithuania, rather than with Soviet Russia itself.[90] Accordingly, in late December 1918, Dmitrii F. Zhilunovich, a Belarusian from the People's Commissariat of Nationalities headed by Iosif V. Stalin, was sent from Moscow to become the leader of Soviet Belarus. On 1 January 1919, together with Miasnikov as his deputy, he proclaimed "a free, independent Belarusian Socialist Republic."[91] At the same time, the Bolshevik Party of Belarus was created as part of the Russian Bolshevik Party.[92]

The new Soviet republic was unilaterally declared to encompass the provinces of Minsk, Mogilev, Grodno, Vitebsk (excluding Latgalia), and Smolensk (excluding four counties). Moreover, parts of the provinces of Kaunas, Wilno, Suwałki, and Chernigov were likewise to be included.[93] The proposed borders would include not only the provinces predominantly populated by Belarusians but also every single county with any Belarusian minority. At all events, this unilateral claim was very short-lived, as only two weeks later Moscow annexed to Soviet Russia the Belarusian-claimed parts of the provinces of Smolensk,

Chernigov, and Vitebsk, as well as the entire province of Mogilev. What was left of Soviet Belarus was to be merged with Soviet Lithuania.[94]

The formal creation of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania and Belarus, or Litbel, took place on 28 February 1919. In contrast to the alacrity with which all previous Moscow's orders had been carried out, this one was acted upon with uncharacteristic tardiness. While Soviet Lithuania was unenthusiastic about the merger,[95] Soviet Belarus was especially reluctant to participate in it. Moscow, however, continued to apply great pressure.[96] In the end, the unification was forced on Minsk and Wilno by Ioffe, the special representative of the Central Committee, the task having taken him over a month to complete. He personally selected the members of Litbel's government, although they had to be approved by Moscow.[97] Minsk's reluctance is explained by the merger terms, amounting to the annexation of what was left of Soviet Belarus by Soviet Lithuania. The new government, headed by Mitskevich-Kapsukas who also doubled as foreign minister, included no ethnic Belarusians.[98] The capital city was Wilno.

The main source of Litbel's financing was loans from Moscow. Curiously, as many as five languages, "Lithuanian, Polish, Yiddish, Belarusian, and Russian, as the most widely used in the Republic," were designated as official.[99] In practice, the authorities used Russian, since it was the only language spoken by everyone, including the Red Army troops in Litbel, who were overwhelmingly nonindigenous.[100] In general, national activities of any sort could only be very limited, since, as Mitskevich-Kapsukas put it, "the Communist Party of Lithuania and Belarus, as part of the Russian Bolshevik Party, never included independence among its goals."[101]

Indeed, given that the Bolsheviks, as Marxists, asserted the only meaningful divisions within society to be those relating to the means of production, it may have seemed strange that they would set up national Soviet republics in the Borderlands. This was especially so since Marxists viewed national differences as obscuring proletarian unity. In fact, the majority of prominent Bolshevik activists and theoreticians proposed to ignore and obliterate, if necessary, national differences.[102] Lenin, however, imposed his own approach on the Bolsheviks, as he strove to reconcile the principle of proletarian unity irrespective of national differences with that of national self-determination.[103]

He acknowledged the right of the subject nationalities of the former Russian Empire to separate from Russia, making sure that this was not meant as a deviation from the overriding principle of proletarian unity. Lenin argued that, as soon as an oppressed nationality separated from Russia, its national prejudices, fed by tsarist persecution, would begin to subside.[104] At this stage, class-conscious proletarians in the separated nationalities would pull for unity with Soviet Russia.

Then, in cooperation with Moscow, the center and brain of worldwide revolution, they would organize local revolutions in their newly established national states. Once revolution was victorious in these states, as it had been in Russia, nothing more would stand in the way of proletarian unity. To ensure this outcome, the Bolsheviks should, on the one hand, avoid Great Russian chauvinism, and, on the other, encourage and assist the working class of the formerly subject nationalities in their natural striving for unity with Soviet Russia.[105]

Accordingly, the Eighth Party Congress of March 1919, "in order to overcome the suspicion of the toiling masses of the oppressed countries toward the proletariat of the states which had oppressed these countries," recognized the "full equality of nations" and their "right to political secession." At the same time, as a transitional form on the way to full proletarian unity, the Bolsheviks accepted "a federative unification of states, organized on the Soviet pattern."[106]

This approach was essential in view of the Bolshevik grand design of spreading the Revolution to the rest of Europe. It was generally agreed among Marxists that proletarian revolution was bound to engulf the entire world, and especially the most industrialized countries, where the working class was the strongest and best organized. Therefore, the Bolshevik Revolution, occurring in Russia, a fairly backward country with a relatively weak working class, was rather anomalous to the more orthodox Marxists. While Lenin tried to explain this anomaly by advancing the theory of Tsarist Russia as the weakest link in a chain of bourgeois states, he also argued that the spreading of the Bolshevik Revolution to the most industrialized countries of Europe, especially to Germany, was a sine qua non from the Marxist theory point of view, and one of the most pressing practical tasks.[107]

Already on the eve of the German defeat, in October 1918, Moscow declared that "the Soviet government builds its entire policy on the prospect of a social revolution in both imperialist camps [that is, of the Central and Allied Powers]," and that it was "binding the fate of Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Finland closely to the fate of the proletarian revolution."[108] Three days before the signing of the armistice in the west, Lenin asserted that "never before have we been so close to an international proletarian revolution as at present." Over the next few months, he consistently proclaimed that this international revolution, spearheaded by Soviet Russia, would lead to the creation of "the Worldwide Federative Soviet Republic."[109] Accordingly, Trotsky, the Commissar of War, made clear in his speech of 18 November 1918 that the Bolsheviks envisaged the Borderlands as a crucial "connecting link between Soviet Russia and the future Soviet Germany and Austria-Hungary. This is the beginning of a federation, of a European Communist federation."[110]

While the Soviet republic of Litbel was intended to be a link between Soviet Russia and East Prussia, Soviet Ukraine was to connect Russia with Austro-Hungarian successor states, especially Hungary. In late 1918, while German troops were withdrawing from Ukraine, Moscow employed a two-pronged tactic to capture that country. On the one hand, it offered peace negotiations to the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic that had just come to power in Kiev.[111] On the other hand, it made preparations for an invasion and formed a Soviet Ukrainian government in Kursk, which declared its existence on 28 November. It was headed by Georgii L. Piatakov, an ethnically Russian native of Ukraine. The government consisted of both ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, including two Russian military commanders, Vladimir A. Antonov-Ovseenko and Kliment E. Voroshilov. Thus, a war between the Bolsheviks and the Directory was begun. Kiev, incredulous in the face of their just-signed understanding with Moscow, was informed by Chicherin that "the military operations taking place on Ukrainian territory involve the army of the Directory and the army of Piatakov. There are at present no armed conflicts between Ukraine and Soviet Russia."[112]

Red Army troops entered Kiev in early February 1919. The Soviet Ukrainian government established itself at Khar'kov, while Piatakov was replaced by Khristian Rakovskii, a Bulgarian-Romanian educated in France. The new leader of Soviet Ukraine publicly declared that the Ukrainian national question needed to be treated with circumspection in view of the lack of Ukrainian national consciousness among the population.[113] Given that he himself, and many other prominent members of his government, did not speak Ukrainian, Rakovskii's claim that demands to make Ukrainian the official language were "injurious to Ukrainian revolution" sounded sincere.[114]

In March 1919, Soviet Ukraine adopted a constitution closely resembling that of Soviet Russia. It declared Soviet Ukraine to be a country of "the dictatorship of the proletariat," the latter having the exclusive right to participate in the government and to enjoy "freedom of speech, the press, meetings, and unions." According to the constitution, Soviet Ukraine was independent and sovereign. The Ukrainian government was proclaimed able to conduct its own foreign, domestic, military, and monetary policies, including deciding on issues of war and peace.[115] Most of this remained only on paper, however, as in practice Moscow often prevented Khar'kov from exercising its constitutional rights.[116] It should be noted that the relationship between Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia, as well as other Soviet republics, remained undefined, although the constitution declared Ukraine's "firm determination to join a single worldwide socialist Soviet republic as soon as the conditions for its formation would arise," as well as its "decision to enter into closest political union with [the presently existing

Soviet republics] for the purpose of a common struggle for the triumph of the world Communist revolution."[117]

At the same time that the constitution was adopted, the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in Moscow decided to reduce the status of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party to that of a province committee. In addition, on Lenin's direct orders, thousands of Russian food procurement agents were sent to Ukraine to requisition grain from the peasants and ship it to Moscow and St. Petersburg.[118] The countryside responded with countless uprisings.

In the spring of 1919, the Red Army continued pushing the Directory's troops to the west, until they approached the Galician border. As already mentioned, Galicia, an ethnically Polish-Ukrainian province of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, had been rent by war since the attempt at a unilateral military takeover of Lwów by Ukrainian troops on 1 November 1918. Most of East Galicia, predominantly Ukrainian, was then controlled by the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), defending the territory against the Polish Army. On 22 January 1919, a union between the Directory's Ukrainian state and the ZUNR had been proclaimed. The Soviets, however, treated East Galicia as separate from the rest of Ukraine. In early May 1919, Rakovskii sent an official note to the West Ukrainian People's Republic calling it "East Galician People's Republic," proposing a delineation of "a border between the two republics," and offering "a fraternal hand to the workers and peasants of East Galicia, with whose liberation from all bourgeois oppression we sympathize ardently."[119] The Bolsheviks had two goals in mind. They wanted to isolate the Directory and, most importantly, "to establish a firm railroad connection" through East Galicia with Hungary where a revolutionary government led by Bela Kun, Lenin's associate, had been created on 21 March. In return for fulfilling these requests, Soviet Ukraine offered the East Galicians supplies of arms.[120] The latter move was designed to strengthen their resistance against Poland,[121] but the main objective was clearly "a matter of relieving Hungary." The East Galicians were quite responsive,[122] but the whole scheme soon became moot, as the powerful offensive of White Russian troops, under General Anton I. Denikin, forced the Red Army in Ukraine to scratch its plans to advance into Hungary altogether. The Soviets shifted into a defensive mode.

The Więckowski Mission

In several notes to the Polish Foreign Ministry, sent during the months preceding the Polish-Soviet clash of mid-February 1919, Chicherin, with impressive stubbornness, requested recognition de jure of the Bolshevik regime in Russia; establishment of diplomatic relations; and settlement

of the territorial question. To induce the Poles to comply, he hinted at the possibility of returning the vast collections of Polish national treasures, forcibly removed from Poland by the tsarist government. At the same time, in veiled blackmail, he reminded the Polish government that there remained within Russia "hundreds of thousands of Polish refugees" who were completely destitute.[123] So long as there were no official relations between Warsaw and Moscow, the refugees would continue to suffer. In addition, Soviet Russia offered to act on behalf of Litbel in settling the territorial issue.

Strictly speaking, Chicherin got a little ahead of himself, as Litbel did not yet exist. Belarusian Communists and their Lithuanian counterparts were doing their best to delay executing Moscow's orders to create one Soviet republic for the two countries. In the end, Litbel was proclaimed as late as 28 February. In mid-January, however, Soviet Lithuania and Soviet Belarus together sent a note to Warsaw protesting against Polish troops' entering Białystok County of Grodno Province which had just been evacuated by the German Army. The note claimed both that the county's working masses "feel their ties with the Soviet republics of Lithuania and Belarus to be unbreakable," and that its Polish population was a minority.[124] The former claim is difficult to explain, given that, for instance, the Soviet republic of Belarus had been in existence for only two weeks. The latter, though, was probably meant to emphasize that, according to the Russian census of 1897, Poles were merely a plurality there, making up less than half the population. Despite this Polish incursion, Soviet Lithuania and Soviet Belarus proposed to establish a mixed commission to delineate the border between themselves and Poland.[125]

The Poles, however, refused even to consider these issues. Recognition of the Soviet government in Moscow and establishing diplomatic relations with it were out of the question, given both its unenviable position of a pariah among governments and its assumed poor chances of survival. Most importantly, such a decision would surely incur the wrath of the Entente in whose hands lay the delineation of Poland's border with Germany and Czechoslovakia. Warsaw was likewise uninterested in settling the territorial question, since such settlement would necessarily involve recognition of Soviet Russia. As to the note received from Soviet Lithuania and Soviet Belarus together, the Polish Foreign Ministry did not even bother to answer, considering these Soviet republics to be merely pawns in Moscow's hands and completely illegitimate. The parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee subsequently praised the government for having "properly assessed the danger that would threaten Polish interests by becoming involved in any negotiations with the Russian authorities without getting in touch with the Allied Powers, and [for having] been able to avoid this danger."[126]

Instead of considering these Soviet requests, Warsaw tried to push its own agenda, limited to such practical issues as getting the members of the Polish legation out of Russia, improving the lot of Polish refugees there, and inducing the Bolsheviks to stop taking hostages from among Poles living in Russia. To facilitate a solution of these issues and move out of the impasse, Warsaw resolved to send to Moscow a special mission headed by Aleksander Więckowski.[127] The mission arrived on 16 March 1919, in secret to avoid arousing Allied suspicions. Being a Socialist, Więckowski presented the Bolshevik leadership with an official letter from the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party. The letter argued, among other things, that the territorial issue in Lithuania and Belarus should be resolved by a vote of the population taken "under conditions of complete political freedom." Since voting rights and political freedom had different meanings in democratic Poland and Soviet Russia, Lenin was able to reply that he "fully agreed and precisely wanted the resolution to be based on the vote of the working masses."[128] Given this fundamental difference, it is highly unlikely that any useful agreement would have been reached.

Accordingly, Chicherin, acting ostensibly on behalf of the Litbel Republic and Soviet Ukraine, made Więckowski two very vague "peace offers." According to the first of them, the border between Poland and Litbel would be defined by "the vote of the working class," after withdrawal of troops from the contested regions. As for the border between Poland and Soviet Ukraine, it was to be defined "based on the principle of organized expression of the will of the working class" within the contested territories,[129] this formula undoubtedly meaning the will of the local organs of the Bolshevik Party. Chicherin must have expected Warsaw to reject these offers, if only because of the arbitrary and undemocratic principle of the vote of the working class. Moscow, no doubt, intended them simply to create confusion in Warsaw and make it more difficult for Piłsudski to carry out his imminent spring offensive.[130] These hopes were dashed, however, by the unexpected Polish capture of Wilno on 21 April 1919.[131] Once this happened, Chicherin no longer saw any point in continuing talks with Więckowski. The Soviets broke off the negotiations and sent him under a "strict and severe military escort" to Finland; then, they took numerous hostages from among Poles living in Soviet Russia.[132]

The first few months of the Polish-Soviet conflict showed that the prospects for reaching any understanding between the two sides were very poor. The inherent difficulty in resolving two contrary territorial claims related to the Borderlands, a territory inhabited by several nationalities, was compounded by the atmosphere of deep-seated mutual suspicion and aversion. The necessity for

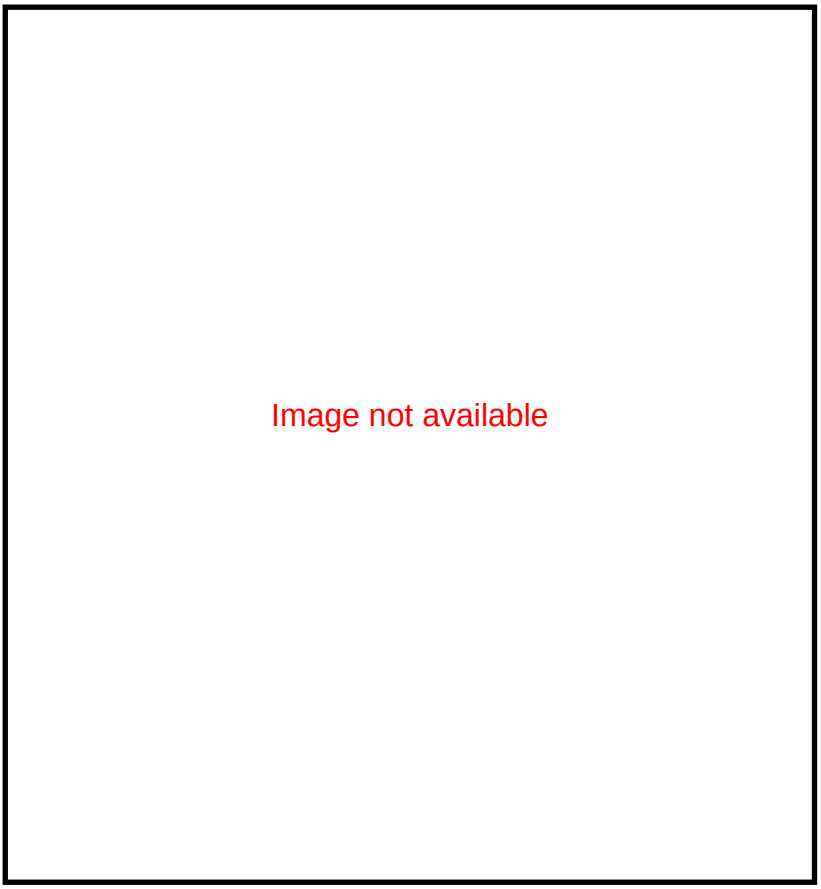

FIG. 3. Aleksander Więckowski, the Polish negotiator. MHMSW.

Poland to be on good terms with the Entente, then clearly anti-Bolshevik, also prevented any meaningful dialogue between Warsaw and Moscow. Such a dialogue was, in any case, very unlikely, given Moscow's predilection for making bogus offers designed mainly to influence the Polish "toiling masses" and to "hamper the enemy." Most importantly, the Red Army's advance into the Borderlands, especially into the territories Warsaw considered ethnically Polish, led to the outbreak of hostilities. For Moscow, however, the advance and the concurrent establishment of national Soviet republics in this region was necessary as a means of spreading revolution to the rest of Europe. Overall, it seemed clear that the war would have to run its course before any sincere thought of coming to terms might be entertained on either side.

CHAPTER II

Failed Negotiations

The Polish Offensives of 1919

During most of March and early April 1919 the front line did not change, as muddy roads prevented any significant operations, but the Poles worked on preparing their spring offensive on the Soviet front. Already in early March, the skeleton military staff of the Polish commander in chief began planning a raid to capture the city of Wilno.[1] On 4 April 1919, the Parliament called on "the Government and the High Command to expend all energy in order to liberate most expeditiously the northeastern part of Poland with its capital Wilno from Bolshevik invasion and to unite it permanently with the Republic of Poland."[2] Two days later, Piłsudski started the buildup of forces necessary for such an operation.[3] The time was pressing because the newly formed Lithuanian Army was doing its best to capture the city, trying in addition to enlist the help of German volunteers.[4]

The Polish offensive began on 15–16 April, with an attack on Lida and Baranowicze. At the same time, a strike force consisting of a cavalry brigade and a crack Legionary infantry division slipped behind the Bolshevik lines near Lida and raced north, straight toward Wilno. The hundred-kilometer raid was a very risky undertaking, not least because to maintain mobility the cavalry took little ammunition, and because they marched out without forage, as for some reason it had not arrived. Luckily for them, they found large stores of oats on their way to Wilno, which saved the situation.[5] After a three-day march, during which they managed to remain undetected, the cavalry attacked the city from the east. Since this side, considered entirely safe, had been left unguarded,[6] the Poles were able to take most of the city before meeting any

resistance from the garrison, numerically several-fold stronger. Thanks to the cooperation of Wilno railroad workers, a train was quickly sent for the infantry, which had lagged behind. The train brought in the Legionaries right at the critical moment, when the cavalry had almost exhausted their supplies of ammunition. After two more days of fighting, the Poles captured the whole city on 21 April.[7] By then, Lida, Nowogródek, and Baranowicze had also been taken. In the last week of April, General Edward Śmigły-Rydz consolidated the Wilno success by defeating, one after another, three large Bolshevik formations converging on the city from the north, east, and south.[8] In mid-May, the Polish-Soviet front line was already sixty kilometers east of Wilno. The city, along with the entire Belarusian territory west of the old German trenches,[9] was now firmly in Polish hands.

The reaction of the Borderlands population to the Polish advance was varied. Naturally, the local Poles were ecstatic to see the Polish Army, their welcome celebrations being particularly exuberant in Białystok and Sokółka. Their traditional hostility toward Russia had been compounded by having been a primary target of Bolshevik terror in the area. However, the Orthodox population, dominating the territories south of the river Niemen, tended to be much less enthusiastic, and sometimes sympathized with the Bolsheviks.[10] While older Orthodox peasants often desired a return of Tsarist Russia, many young peasants showed a tendency both to support the Bolsheviks,[11] fellow East Slavs who urged them to parcel out landed estates, and to oppose the Poles, who were bent on restoring the landowners' property. Quite a few as well were outright confused about the political situation, like those in Ukraine who adopted the slogan: "We want the Soviets and Tsar Nikolai Nikolaevich, so that there won't be any lords!"[12] It should be noted that the Red Army had a well-developed propaganda apparatus, which the Polish largely lacked. Moreover, as they were withdrawing, the Bolsheviks tended to arm the peasants in an effort to spur them to a guerilla war against the Poles. This tactic brought some results in the Polesie region.[13] Overall, however, anti-Polish guerilla movements were never particularly strong, especially in Belarus, so that the Poles did not even have to guard bridges and other strategic objects. By contrast, anti-Bolshevik guerilla units, few and far between in the first stage of the war,[14] subsequently became ubiquitous, especially in Ukraine.

Local Jews were divided in their councils. The strictly religious and the property owners viewed the Bolsheviks with considerable antipathy. At the same time, most Borderlands Jews were linguistically Russified and disliked Poles for their strong nationalism. The atheistic Jewish youth, meanwhile, tended to support the Bolsheviks who advertised an ideologically driven program for

complete equality of ethnic groups, including an end to anti-Semitism.[15] The reality of Soviet rule, however, quite often showed this promise to be an empty one. Lenin himself ordered the Bolsheviks to "treat the Jews with an iron rod," and did not show the slightest interest in punishing Bolshevik military units that participated in Jewish pogroms.[16] Bolshevik troops were certainly no less anti-Semitic than the Polish, and much less disciplined at that.[17] For example, in Ukraine, the Bolsheviks committed three times as many pogroms as did the Poles, killing in the process six times as many Jews.[18] In addition, urban property owners and traders, many of them Jewish, found themselves a target of various repressive measures under Bolshevik rule.[19]

Severe repressions were sometimes employed also against rural populations.[20] According to Mitskevich-Kapsukas, the head of the Litbel Republic, "disorderly requisitioning from the local population and its endless compulsory services provoked mistrust, and embittered even those sections of the population who had formerly welcomed the Red Army as their liberators from the hated German occupation and from landlord oppression." Consequently, it was "impossible to reinforce the ranks of the Red Army with local men owing to their hostility toward it," even though the Cheka (the secret police) tried its best to deal with draft dodgers. Acute food shortages caused "the poorer population of Wilno to die from hunger." As a result, even the city's proletariat "began to dream" about its "liberation," either by the Poles or by the Lithuanians.[21] Indeed, nearly everyone, but especially the urban population, faced starvation and even famine under the Bolsheviks.[22] Overall, it is fair to say that Polish troops were welcomed in those parts where the inhabitants, whether Polish or otherwise, had had an opportunity to acquaint themselves first-hand with the double scourge of Bolshevik rule: hunger and terror.[23]

Having captured Wilno and reached the line of the German trenches, the Poles stopped their offensive, as troops were needed to finish the war against the Ukrainians in East Galicia. Moreover, since it appeared that Germany was not going to sign the Versailles treaty, thus renewing hostilities, Poland had to make preparations for war against its western neighbor.[24]

At about the same time, the Soviets were critically reassessing the military performance of their troops on the Western Front. On 2 June, the Politburo decided to replace not only the commander of the Army of the Litbel Republic, but also all the members of its Revolutionary-Military Soviet. The whole Western Front was to be reorganized according to "exclusively strategic considerations." In particular, "all nationally based divisions and formations" were to be re-formed as regular Red Army units and "transferred to other fronts from the regions presently occupied by them."[25] This decision resulted no doubt from

the overall poor showing of those units on the battlefield, and from their high desertion rates when stationed near home.

To be sure, there were never any nationally based Belarusian or Ukrainian military units of any significance in the Red Army.[26] On the contrary, Belarusian and Ukrainian conscripts were as a rule mixed into regular Red Army detachments, far away from their home countries. The new policy resulted, however, in the Polish Western Division being renamed the 52nd Division and sent against Denikin's White forces in the south of Russia. In early June 1919, the leadership of the Polish Communist Party advised their Russian counterparts that, in view of the poor "quality of the conscripted material," it was "inadmissible to form any kind of separate Polish military units," even as small as a company. "All conscripted material extracted from among the Polish population should be merged into one common and indivisible Red Army," concluded the Polish Communists, as they renounced "any responsibility" for units formed contrary to this principle.[27] Even more strikingly, the sterling reliability of Latvian Bolshevik troops, which had been instrumental in saving the Revolution in its early stages, was now a thing of the past. During May 1919, the Army of Soviet Latvia suffered from mass desertion, the rate fluctuating between 30 and 70 percent depending on the regiment. In June, the whole army was dissolved, and those Latvian regiments that could be salvaged were withdrawn from Latgalia to Russia proper.[28]

The Poles, facing no similar difficulties,[29] began preparing a new offensive against the Bolsheviks in the early summer of 1919. Now that their victory in East Galicia was complete and Germany had finally signed the Versailles treaty, they were able to concentrate significant forces in the Borderlands. They included for the first time the so-called Haller Army, formed in France out of Polish volunteers,[30] as well as the Poznań Army, consisting mainly of Polish volunteers who had served in the Prussian Army. Together with the Legionary divisions, they were among the best Polish units.

The aim of the offensive was to take control of the entire length of the strategic railroad Polotsk—Mołodeczno—Minsk—Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe. In Belarus, the offensive began on 1 July with an attack on Wilejka and Mołodeczno. Polish troops were able to push the Bolsheviks back, although attempts at surrounding them proved unsuccessful. On 8 August, they captured Minsk, after an outflanking raid of the Poznań Cavalry Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel Władysław Anders. In Ukraine, the offensive began on the same day with an attack on Krzemieniec, Dubno, and Równe. Here also the Poles were able to push Bolshevik troops back. By the end of August 1919, Polish troops had taken all of West Volhynia in the south, as well as Borisov

and Bobruisk,[31] both on the Berezina river, in the north. Moreover, in the very north, Polish troops approached Daugavpils and Polotsk in September. At this point, the offensive was halted. In Belarus, Polish troops took positions behind a well-chosen defensive line along the rivers Dvina, Ulla, Berezina, and Ptich'. Thus, the Poles controlled all of Belarus with the exception of the provinces of Mogilev and Vitebsk. In Ukraine, most of Volhynia was now under Polish occupation. In the midsection of the front line, Sarny and Łuniniec were also securely in Polish hands (see Map 1).[32] Polish troops stayed in defensive positions through the entire fall of 1919.

The successful spring and summer offensives of 1919 made Piłsudski think highly of his Polish Army and discount Soviet Russia's military strength. In July 1919, for instance, he praised his troops as "excellent" and "worthy of admiration," while declaring: "I am not afraid of Russia's power. If I wanted to, I could now advance as far as Moscow, and nobody would be able to withstand my power." In November, he argued that the Polish Army was "a power", while Bolshevik troops were "corpses." He believed he could beat them, "wherever and whenever" he wanted.[33]

Polish Federalism

The Polish military successes in the Borderlands and especially the capture of Wilno, the capital of the Northwestland, put Warsaw in a position to consider various political options for the occupied territories. Most Poles welcomed this development, for a number of reasons. They viewed the regions of Wilno, Grodno, and Białystok as ethnically Polish territories, and expected Warsaw to ensure, at the very least, their close connection with Poland. Local Poles owned overwhelming amounts of land, especially in the Northwestland, but also in the Southwestland. The majority of leading Polish aristocrats, including virtually all the princely families, hailed from the Borderlands. Furthermore, Poles felt that the reborn Polish state was a direct continuation of the partitioned *Rzeczpospolita,* consisting of Crown Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The fact that in the summer of 1918, Moscow had declared null and void all agreements concluded by Russia in connection with the partitions of Poland,[34] seemed to give additional legitimacy to Polish involvement in the Borderlands. Most importantly, a Polish military presence in the region appeared to be necessary in view of the Bolshevik military threat, as it was generally agreed among Poles that the best eastern policy was to organize the first line of defense in the Borderlands, so as to provide a buffer against westward Russian expansion.

The Pole with the single greatest influence over practical implementation of eastern policy was Józef Piłsudski. Born into an old Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian noble family,[35] he hailed from Wilno Province. Piłsudski's university studies were cut short by his deportation to Siberia for indirect involvement in an antitsarist plot. After his return from exile, he joined the Polish Socialist Party, eventually becoming the leader of its militant anti-Russian wing. During the Great War, he organized and led the Polish Legions that fought alongside the Austrians against the Russians. In November 1918, when Poland was reestablished, Piłsudski was proclaimed both Chief of State and commander in chief of the Polish Army. He was unanimously confirmed in these posts by the democratically elected Parliament in January 1919. Thus, Piłsudski had sufficient power, and enough personal popularity, to try to implement his own brand of Polish policy toward the Borderlands.

As the leader of reborn Poland, Piłsudski set himself the objective of thwarting, "as far as possible from the place where the new national life was burgeoning and taking shape," any Soviet attempt at "imposing once more a foreign life upon us."[36] The best way to do it, in his view, was to weaken the Russian state permanently by detaching from it all the territories inhabited by non-Russians.[37] Accordingly, Poland strove to assist all the subjected nations of European Russia in their efforts to separate from it. One of the most important goals of Polish foreign policy was to create a formal political and military anti-Russian alliance of the Baltic states and Finland under the aegis of Poland. At the same time, Piłsudski tried to induce various Russian émigré politicians to accept the concept of a strictly national Russian state, which he called the "third Russia," as opposed to either the Red or the White Russia.[38]

The most crucial aspect of this broadly conceived scheme was Polish involvement in the Borderlands, where Piłsudski tried to help the national movements of Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania fight for separation from Russia. Clearly, these nations needed assistance, and Poland, in his view, was able to assist them thanks to its long-standing traditions of struggle against Russia, significant military potential, and considerable cultural as well as economic strength. Pressed by Russia, the Borderlands nations would naturally lean toward Poland and accept some sort of military and political alliance. This would lead to a federation of these nations with Poland, where they would remain internally independent, or at least autonomous, but where Warsaw would have the decisive voice in the most important political and military matters.[39]

The idea of a voluntary federation of Poland proper with the Borderlands dated as far back as the Polish Socialist Party's founding congress of 1892 in Paris.[40] This concept was supported by the "Liberation" Peasant Party, and by

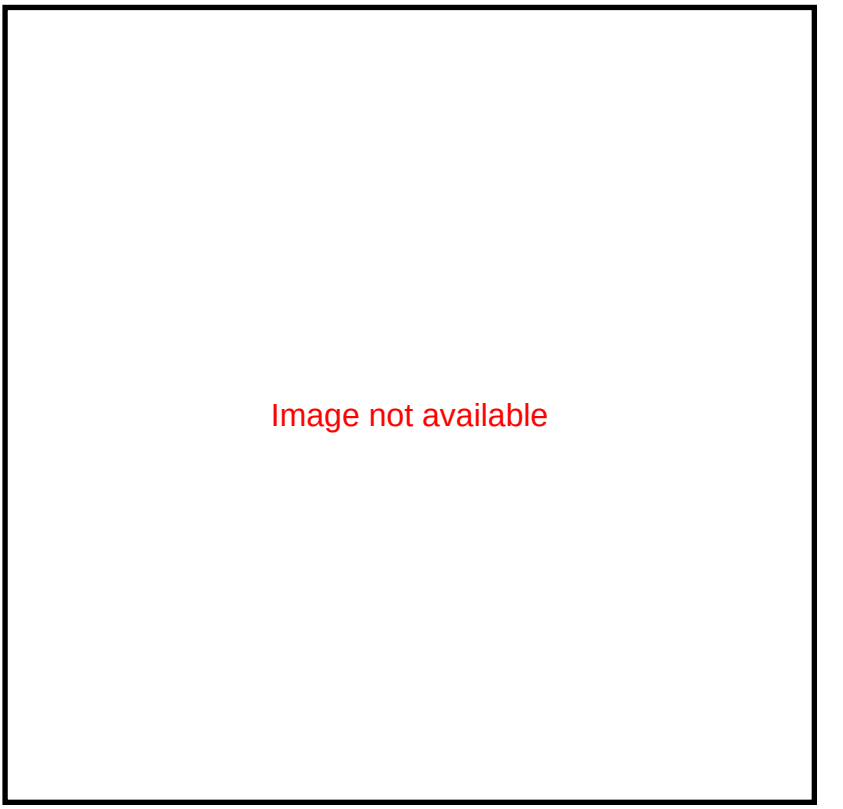

FIG. 4. Józef Piłsudski, the Polish Chief of State and commander in chief. BN.

the Borderlands large landowners. It also attracted many eminent members of the intelligentsia, regardless of their political outlook, most notably the premier of Poland, the famous pianist Ignacy Paderewski.

This program was opposed, however, by the National Democrats, led by Roman Dmowski. The ND was the single most popular party in Poland, commanding a plurality in Parliament. On most issues, the party was able to muster an absolute parliamentary majority, drawing on the support of several smaller parties, including the "Piast" Peasant Party.[41] Dmowski was a seasoned politician, having been the leader of the Polish caucus in the former Russian State Duma. He headed the Polish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, and had good relations with and significant influence with the French.

Dmowski considered that, in the era of nationalism, the only viable states were nation states. Therefore, Poland should be reconstructed as such a state, encompassing territories where: (1) Polish inhabitants constituted a

very significant, if not the major, part of the population, dominating economically and culturally; (2) Polish-Western culture[42] was well rooted; and (3) the Catholic religion predominated. In the Borderlands, the regions of Białystok, Grodno, and Wilno clearly fulfilled these three conditions and thus should be incorporated into the Polish state. The difficulty was that these territories, though connected with Poland proper, formed a wedge stretching away to the northeast. To defend effectively such a territory would be well-nigh impossible, especially since East Galicia, seen by the National Democrats as an integral part of the Polish state, stretched away from Poland proper to the southeast. Therefore, the territories between the two regions needed likewise to be incorporated. "If we want to have Wilno on the one hand, and East Galicia on the other, then we cannot let a foreign [that is, Russian] territory cut in as far as the Bug river," argued Dmowski.[43] Thus, strategic considerations dictated that the western part of the Borderlands should be incorporated into Poland, even though much of it might not be ethnically Polish.[44]

The eastern part of the Borderlands, inhabited predominantly by either Belarusians or Ukrainians, and dominated by the Russian Orthodox Church, should stay within the Russian state. Indeed, Dmowski viewed these two ethnic groups as unable to acquire independence, given the low level of national consciousness and culture among their peasant masses. This was not the case, however, with Lithuanians and Latvians who displayed a relatively high level of national consciousness and culture. Since the former were characterized by their Catholicism and traditional Polish cultural influence, Dmowski initially offered them union with Poland. As soon as it became obvious that Lithuanians were completely unwilling to enter into any such union, however, he accepted it, and left Lithuania proper and Latgalia out of his plan.

Dmowski viewed federalism as detrimental to the new Polish state. "Federation requires, first and foremost, the ability to compromise," he argued. Given that Lithuanians and other Borderlands nations were not at all inclined to make compromises, federating with them meant "creating disorder, decay, anarchy, and a source of weakness for the state."[45] The whole federalist idea appeared to him to be unrealistic, since it presupposed a significant level of national consciousness among the ethnic groups to be federated. Yet, the peasant masses of Belarus and Ukraine were largely indifferent to the nationalist ideologies proclaimed by their sparse native intelligentsia.

Piłsudski realized that the practical application of his federation concept in the Borderlands would be very difficult. As he himself admitted, the Poles were entering the area with weapons in their hands, "which is contrary to the principles of federation. Besides, I did not see people there who would want to join

such a federation." To make matters worse, the federalist program faced significant opposition abroad. The Allied Powers desired to rebuild a strong Russia as their anti-German ally in the east, and did not approve of any Polish territorial program in the Borderlands. Therefore, Piłsudski's tactic in carrying out his program was to "create faits accomplis and later receive recognition de jure."[46]

Given these difficulties, some contingency planning seemed prudent in the event that his federalist concept could not be implemented. Piłsudski, therefore, never publicly declared himself in favor of federalism, accepting the incorporationist concept "if no other possibilities should materialize."[47] In the final analysis, federalism was, to him, not a goal in itself, but rather a tool in his grand design of destroying Russia as a multinational empire, so as to ensure Poland's long-term survival.[48]

The "liberation" of Wilno by the Poles on 21 April 1919 presented Piłsudski with the first opportunity to try to implement his federalist ideas. His negotiations with the Polish, Lithuanian, and Belarusian national activists residing in the city, however, brought no results. Therefore, as he wrote to Premier Paderewski, his Wilno manifesto "To the Inhabitants of the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania," promulgated on 22 April, was meant to be a temporary solution that "would not block the way in any direction."[49] The population was promised "an opportunity to solve internal, nationality, and religious matters in such a way, as you yourselves will choose, without any violence or pressure from Poland." The primary task of the newly created Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands was "to let the population express themselves as to their destiny and their needs through freely chosen representatives. Voting in these elections will be secret, universal, direct, and ensuring the equality of the sexes." The new administration was to take "care of everyone, without distinction of faith and nationality."[50]

Giving the local population a chance to express their views, however, did not help the cause of federalism. During the summer of 1919, a total of 1,119 petitions bearing 120,480 signatures was sent from the Wilno region to the Parliament in Warsaw, demanding that it be immediately incorporated into Poland. Spontaneous local assemblies, convened in towns and villages, adopted formal resolutions to the same effect. For instance, in the counties of Wilno, Lida, Oszmiana, Troki, and Święciany, 447 such resolutions were adopted on behalf of 1,413 localities.[51] In the first democratic elections to the Wilno City Council, the parties supporting incorporation garnered 64 percent of the vote, while those standing for federation received only 7 percent.[52] The National Democratic caucus in the Parliament charged that Piłsudski had no legal authority to issue his manifesto in the first place. The Parliament passed two motions calling

for incorporation of the northeastern regions into Poland, as requested by the local population.[53] Subsequently, at Paderewski's urging, it expressly disavowed any intention of annexing any part of the former Grand Duchy against the will of the people concerned.[54] However, on 1 July 1919, it passed a motion calling on the government to immediately carry out democratic elections in "the region of Wilno and Nowogródek" for the purpose of deciding its future.[55] Naturally, the result would have been incorporation.

The Civil Administration eventually encompassed the regions of Wilno (including Grodno), Brest-Litovsk, and Minsk.[56] It was headed by Commissioner General, Jerzy Osmołowski, residing in Wilno. An ethnic Pole from the Borderlands and a large landowner, he had some experience in high-level administration and was a faithful follower of Piłsudski. The Civil Administration employed nearly twenty thousand public servants, most of them local Poles who not only were reliable politically, but were also among the precious few inhabitants with the necessary education. The Belarusian activists, including many radical Socialists who had been at loggerheads with the local "Polish lords" since 1917, refused to participate in the Civil Administration, treating it as "a government of occupation." Most Belarusians followed this example, ignoring the Civil Administration as much as they could.[57]

At the same time, however, the response of the Belarusian national movement to Piłsudski's policies was not unfavorable. The Belarusian Rada of Wilno sent him a declaration expressing the hope that he would help "to unite all Belarus and reconstruct it as an independent state, a friendly neighbor of Poland."[58] A minister in the Lutskevich quasi-government of Belarus was subsequently received by Piłsudski in Warsaw. In September 1919, the Chief of State came to visit Minsk, taken by Polish troops in the preceding month. He was greeted enthusiastically by both local Poles and Belarusians. In his speech, made in Belarusian, Piłsudski promised solemnly "that nothing will be imposed on this land[59] [which] will decide by itself what way of life and what law to adopt." First, the local inhabitants, who had never known democracy, would be given local self-government. "Then will come the moment when you will be able to express yourselves freely as to how your state is to be ordered."[60] The Belarusians were glad to hear this but they also had their own ideas. A representation of all Belarusian political factions asked Piłsudski to restore "the activities of the state organs of the Belarusian People's Republic," and to organize the republic's military forces.[61] Pointing out that they considered not only Minsk to be Belarusian, but also Wilno and Grodno, they expressed their "hope and trust" that Poland would restore to "the free and independent Belarusian Republic" its eastern cities, "Vitebsk, Mogilev, and ancient Smolensk," still held by the Bolsheviks.[62]

This was more than the Poles could deliver, as Lutskevich would learn just a few days later when he was received by Piłsudski in Warsaw. Official recognition of the Belarusian People's Republic, funded by Berlin,[63] was out of the question. The Entente did not have the slightest intention of taking Belarus away from Russia, whose Bolshevik regime was expected to fall soon. Poland, dependent on the diplomatic and military support of France, could not afford to alienate its main protector and informal ally. Warsaw had been unable even to get the Entente's acceptance of its ideas on the Baltics and Ukraine, let alone Belarus. For the time being, Piłsudski counseled patience. Attempts to act "in grand style" would only be counterproductive. Until the international situation improved, the Belarusians should limit themselves to cultural and educational activity, and thus try to create "a Belarusian Piedmont."[64]

This in itself was an uphill task, in which the Poles did not offer much support. In the summer local elections, Belarusian candidates fared poorly. This was blamed largely on the lack of money to conduct effective election campaigns. In addition, the overwhelmingly rural Belarusian population appeared to be politically indifferent, and the timing of the elections was inconvenient to the peasants. By contrast, Polish candidates, better educated, more urban-based, and having a far greater fundraising ability, did well in most localities.[65]

Belarusian education was also a contested issue. The Civil Administration funded it in the Minsk region but denied funding to Belarusian schools in the regions of Wilno and Grodno. Poles considered the latter to be an integral part of Poland, and National Democratic influence among the local Polish population was very strong.[66] The administration acted in accordance with Piłsudski's pronouncement of September 1919 that "Wilno is and must remain as the center of Polishness in the Eastern Lands, [while] Minsk should become the Eastern Lands' Belarusian center."[67]

In the fall of 1919, the Polish Ministry of War granted Belarusian national activists the funds necessary to create two Belarusian battalions; however, as it turned out later, two-thirds of the funds were embezzled by one of the activists. To make matters worse, the Belarusians were hampered by internal wrangling, Bolshevik infiltration, insufficient support from the Polish Army, and the scarcity of Belarusian officers with proper military qualifications. Significantly, the number of Belarusian volunteers did not exceed five hundred, being especially low among the rank and file. Overall, the Belarusian military forces were clearly a failure.[68]

The prospects for Polish federalism were likewise not very bright with regard to Ukraine. To be sure, Piłsudski viewed giving support to Ukrainian independence from Russia as one of the most important tasks of Polish foreign

policy.[69] Nonetheless, the war in East Galicia between the Poles and local Ukrainians, festering since 1 November 1918, prevented any alliance between Poland and Dnieper Ukraine, despite the latter's inability to defend effectively against either the Bolsheviks or Denikin.[70] Even though in May 1919 Piłsudski initiated direct contacts with the head of the Directory, Symon Petliura, it proved politically impossible for the latter to come to terms while the Polish-Ukrainian war in East Galicia was still on. Subsequent talks between the Polish and Dnieper Ukrainian High Commands, and between the Directory's representative and Premier Paderewski led to nothing, as the Ukrainians failed to ratify the signed agreements.[71] Real progress was only achieved after the Poles completed their takeover of East Galicia in July 1919, allowing East Galician troops to cross into Dnieper Ukraine and join Petliura.[72]

Later that month a special envoy of Piłsudski arrived in Kamenets-Podol'sk, where the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic resided, offering Polish military support against the army of Denikin.[73] As a result of this initiative, a Dnieper Ukrainian delegation arrived in Warsaw in August 1919.[74] The ensuing political negotiations, however, failed to bring any results, in view of both the Poles' territorial demands in Volhynia, and East Galician opposition to any agreement with Poland.[75] East Galician influence was still considerable, given that most of Petliura's troops hailed now from East Galicia.[76] Nonetheless, on 1 September 1919, a temporary armistice was signed by the High Commands, leaving East Galicia and West Volhynia on the Polish side.[77]

In late August 1919, Petliura's troops were regaining lost territory in Dnieper Ukraine, taking advantage of heavy fighting between the Bolsheviks and Denikin's army. The Polish High Command instructed its troops to observe benevolent neutrality toward Petliura's troops but not to help in their march on Kiev by taking any actions against the Bolsheviks. Assistance would be given to Ukraine only after an official agreement had been signed, giving Poland "political compensation." Premature aid would be counterproductive, as it would weaken the Polish "position of strength" in negotiations with the Ukrainians.[78] Accordingly, to the disappointment of the Ukrainians, the bilateral trade agreement of 7 October 1919 provided for exchange of Ukrainian foodstuffs for Polish industrial products and oil rather than for arms. It soon turned out, however, that the Poles need not have worried; by mid-November, Petliura's position was again extremely difficult, as East Galician troops abandoned him for Denikin.[79] To make matters worse, Petliura's Dnieper Ukrainian troops were then being literally wiped out by epidemics of typhus and dysentery.[80] Lacking adequate military forces to defend his temporary capital of Kamenets-Podol'sk against Denikin, Petliura invited the Poles to take over

the town,[81] while the Ukrainian government and the remaining members of the Directory went into exile. Thus, the Ukrainians found themselves without a territory, and their troops were disarmed on the Polish side of the armistice line.[82] While this put the Poles in a position to extract some concessions from Petliura, the overall record of Polish federalism in Ukraine at the end of 1919 was not encouraging.

The situation was even worse with respect to Lithuania. The main Lithuanian political parties, espousing the redistribution of large landed property, owned mostly by Poles, realized that federation with Poland would be a hindrance to these plans.[83] Even more important was the fear that Poland would dominate the much smaller Lithuania, resulting in further Polonization of Lithuanians. Unlike Poles, Lithuanian national activists viewed their historical union with Poland as nothing short of a national tragedy, since it had led to voluntary Polonization of the nobility, thereby engendering a reduction of Lithuanian national feeling among the population in favor of local patriotism.[84] From its very beginnings, the Lithuanian national movement had been fundamentally opposed to Polish influence, and quite often was in open conflict with the local Polish population. According to the Lithuanian territorial program, formulated already in 1905, Lithuanian territory included the provinces of Kaunas, Suwałki, Wilno, and Grodno, as well as part of Courland.[85] Lithuanian national activists viewed Polish and Belarusian inhabitants of these provinces as "Slavicized Lithuanians" who must "return to the language of their blood," and argued that individual preferences were, in this case, irrelevant.[86]

In particular, Wilno had always been claimed by the movement as the historical capital of Lithuania. In the wake of the Polish "liberation" of the city, Lithuanian Premier Mykolas Sleževičius declared: "Wilno must be ours. We cannot leave it to the Poles!" The task of wresting the city from them "has become the most important issue of [Lithuanian] foreign policy."[87] Knowing this, Piłsudski made several attempts during 1919 to exchange the city for federation between the two states.[88] These efforts, however, were roundly rejected. Finally, a desperate Polish attempt to instigate a coup d'état in Kaunas and install a federation-oriented government was foiled by the Lithuanians in late August 1919. Thus, the idea of Polish-Lithuanian federation suffered a complete fiasco.

Piłsudski still tried to influence Lithuania through Latvia. He thought that if Riga decided to enter into a federation with Poland, Kaunas would have no choice but to follow in its footsteps. Therefore, as he put it, "having no hope that dealing directly with the Lithuanians will quickly bring desired results, I believe that the solution of our task lies first and foremost in winning over the Latvians to the idea [of federation]."[89] Accordingly, Poland offered

Latvia significant military assistance in the hope that a military alliance would eventually lead to some sort of federation.

The Markhlevskii Missions

During the Polish summer offensive of 1919, Polish-Soviet diplomatic dialogue was renewed thanks to Iulian Markhlevskii, one of the leading Polish Communists. Already in the spring of that year, while in Poland on his way from Germany to Soviet Russia, he came to the conclusion it would be convenient for the Bolsheviks to arrive at some kind of understanding with the Poles, allowing the former to concentrate all their forces against White Russian units led by General Anton Denikin, Admiral Aleksandr V. Kolchak, and General Nikolai N. Iudenich. Since the overwhelming majority of Poles did not want to see the Russian Empire restored and believed that to be the intention of the White generals, there was a possibility of coming to terms on this basis. With this in mind, Markhlevskii contacted some leftist members of the Polish government who, having consulted with Piłsudski, told him that the Polish Army would stop fighting if the Red Army withdrew beyond a certain line.

Markhlevskii arrived in Moscow in June 1919. While Polish Communists in Russia were in principle against political negotiations with Warsaw,[90] Lenin liked the idea. The official purpose of Markhlevskii's mission to Poland would be to resume discussion of the issue of hostages. To lend some credibility to his mission, the Litbel Republic was officially dissolved by the Soviets on 17 July 1919.[91] On the same day, Markhlevskii crossed the front line onto the Polish side.

Negotiations were conducted in the secrecy of a hunting lodge in the Białowieża Forest, halfway between Białystok and Brest-Litovsk, on 29–30 July. With the Polish-German border having been already drawn by the Versailles treaty, political negotiations with the Bolsheviks were no longer out of the question for Piłsudski but he thought it prudent to keep them secret. His representative at Białowieża was Więckowski, accompanied by Count Michał Stanisław Kossakowski, the deputy head of the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands.

Right at the beginning of the talks, Markhlevskii declared that "Lenin had authorized him to carry out far-reaching negotiations on the issue of peace." If only Poland would first agree to stop military operations, Soviet Russia would not object to a Polish-conducted plebiscite in Lithuania and Belarus. "We will not fall out with each other over the fate of Belarus," insisted Markhlevskii. According to him, the Soviet government feared "that the Poles, under pressure

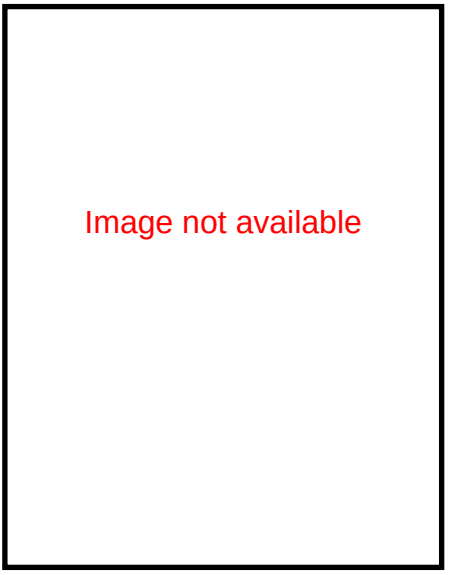

FIG. 5. Iulian Markhlevskii, the Soviet negotiator. AVPRF.

from the Allies, would go beyond the river Berezina, beyond the Dnieper, beyond even Smolensk." To be sure, he firmly believed that "in five years all Europe will be Communist" in any event. For the moment, however, the Bolsheviks were willing to offer the Poles advantageous terms of peace.

All of it sounded less than convincing and, indeed, Piłsudski did not let himself be persuaded by this rather vague offer. First and foremost, he put no faith in Soviets' sincerity. He reasoned, "imagine for a moment that I have concluded peace with them. Then, I must demobilize the army . . . And then I will become powerless at the border. Lenin will be able to do what he wants because he will not hesitate to break even his most solemn word." Therefore, Piłsudski wanted the Bolsheviks to prove their sincerity at the outset. Accordingly, his representatives at Białowieża argued that if the Soviet government wanted to be viewed as "one with which it is possible to talk," it should first release all Polish hostages. Exchange of hostages—innocent people taken to be shot as a reprisal—for Communists imprisoned in Poland for illegal subversive activities was unacceptable on principle. Furthermore, while Markhlevskii had authorization to conduct negotiations also on behalf of Soviet Ukraine, Warsaw had just received a radio telegram from Khar'kov in which Rakovskii vowed to court-martial captured Polish officers, and referred to a new order to Bolshevik troops to take "as many [hostages] as possible."[92] This was in obvious contradiction to

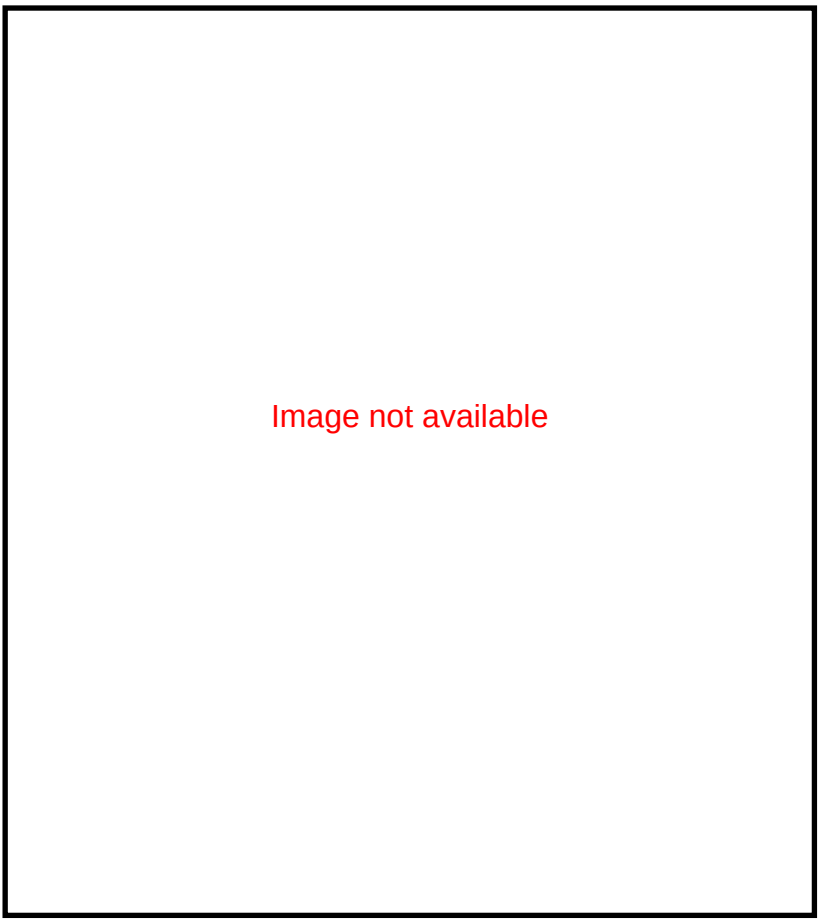

FIG. 6. Michał S. Kossakowski, the Polish negotiator. ADM.

Markhlevskii's mission. Moreover, the Poles declared that a representative of the Soviet Red Cross could reside in Warsaw on the basis of reciprocity, and not unilaterally, as Markhlevskii proposed. In the end, both sides agreed merely to begin negotiations on exchange of civilian prisoners,[93] and on return of Polish refugees, following a release of the hostages by the Bolsheviks.

Markhlevskii left for consultations with the Soviet leadership on 30 July.[94] First and foremost, the Politburo rejected the idea of any representative of the Polish Red Cross in Moscow. Second, apparently reluctant to release Polish hostages while unwilling to terminate talks, they resolved on 16 August "to delay Comrade Markhlevskii's trip [to Poland] as long as possible."[95]

However, with Denikin entering the very heartland of Russia, and Iudenich at the gates of St. Petersburg, the Bolsheviks decided to send

Markhlevskii again, and he crossed the front line on 10 October as the head of the official delegation of the Soviet Red Cross. At Mikaszewicze, a railroad station halfway between Pińsk and Mozyr', the delegates were met by the delegation of the Polish Red Cross, led by Kossakowski.[96] Markhlevskii immediately announced he had Chicherin's authorization to conduct preliminary peace negotiations.[97] Privately, he assured his Polish counterpart that "regarding territory, it is possible to agree; the crux of the matter is that it is possible to conclude peace with [you] but not with Denikin. If [you] are in alliance with Denikin, there is obviously nothing to talk about."[98] Kossakowski understood from it that "territorial questions in this quarrel are insignificant, and Poland will receive what it wants," and passed this message on to Piłsudski. He was under the "entirely clear impression" that Moscow desired peace with Poland at any price but it did not think Warsaw would be willing to conclude it. The Soviets believed the Poles were "in a de facto alliance with Denikin and . . . must comply with the wishes of the Allies." Markhlevskii was given his authorization on his own demand, and told: "Try, but you will see that nothing comes out of it."[99]

On 14 October, Piłsudski's special envoy, Lieutenant Mieczysław Birnbaum, arrived from Warsaw having, however, no official authorization. It was agreed then that their conversation would be "private."[100] Markhlevskii tried to impress on him that Soviet Russia "has already renounced the thought of conquering the world, Europe, or even Poland, for communism."[101] Its goal was to gain internal peace, and carry out "organizational work" at home.[102] Birnbaum asked "whether it would be possible to come to terms based on the Soviet government's '*désintéressement*' with regard to Lithuania and Belarus." Markhlevskii replied that Moscow would "of course" make it a condition that a plebiscite be carried out in these territories. The principles, according to which this plebiscite should be conducted, as well as the issue of borders, should be the subject of official negotiations.[103] Markhlevskii, in turn, asked about the relations between Poland and Denikin. Birnbaum assured him there was no understanding between them; moreover, it appeared one would never be reached, "since Denikin has not relinquished [the idea of] 'one indivisible Russia' and cuts off from Poland even 'Chełm Province.'" Markhlevskii then concluded that "in such a case there is undoubtedly a basis for understanding."[104] Birnbaum, having understood that Moscow wanted to exchange its *désintéressement* in regard to Lithuania and Belarus for Warsaw's *désintéressement* in regard to the war between Denikin and the Bolsheviks, assured him that such an exchange would be acceptable if the offer was made categorically, positively, and by "an outstanding Russian" rather than a Pole.[105]

Another unofficial envoy of Piłsudski, Captain Ignacy Boerner, shuttled between Mikaszewicze and Warsaw. On 18 October, he also tried to impress on Markhlevskii that "Denikin [presents] a mortal danger to Poland." Even though "at a given moment" Warsaw could not "abruptly break off relations" with him, it would gladly agree to secretly stop military operations against the Soviets. However, "at present" Poland was unable to get involved in any open negotiations because of its "very complicated" situation in relation to the Entente. Polish borders in the former Austrian partition had not yet been defined, and "therefore at present Poland is not yet entirely free but soon its hands will be 'untied.'" Markhlevskii insisted, however, that the Soviets needed "guarantees" which could be given in the form of a verbal assurance "by Piłsudski, on the one side, and Lenin, on the other, that the accepted terms will be observed."[106]

Having returned from Warsaw, Boerner communicated to Markhlevskii on 26 October that "at present they are unable to conclude peace because of the Allies." Nonetheless, the Poles were willing mutually to "suspend" military operations at the front line, as this could be done "under various pretexts."[107] They would do this because, as Boerner put it, "it is important to us that you beat Denikin; take your regiments [from the Polish front], send them against Denikin, or against Iudenich, we will not touch you." Markhlevskii still insisted that he would like to hear this from someone having a written authorization, and to conclude a formal agreement, if not in writing then at least verbally. Boerner replied that Piłsudski was willing to "send his representative to Moscow, who would give Lenin such a guarantee, but a [Soviet] delegate could not be received in Warsaw, because it would be impossible to hide such a fact under the conditions prevailing there, and receiving a delegate would be tantamount to signing an agreement, and consequently to recognizing the Soviet government, which was something Poland could not do now."[108]

The next day, Markhlevskii wrote Chicherin that he was "deeply convinced we will reach agreement about secret suspension of military operations." Moscow replied, however, that a "verbal" agreement on "an armistice" was unacceptable. It argued that the Soviets were "willing to sign not just an armistice but a lasting peace." The Poles, on the other hand, would "not sign an armistice" and in addition were "afraid" to give a verbal assurance "by their leaders, Piłsudski and Paderewski." Accordingly, Markhlevskii continued to insist on getting "a verbal declaration . . . of the leading personages." With this, Boerner left for Warsaw.[109]

On returning, he simply communicated to Markhlevskii the terms of suspension of military operations by the Poles, as defined by Piłsudski. He did so on 3 November, a day after the signing by the Soviet delegation of an agreement on

the release of Polish hostages.[110] Piłsudski declared that Polish troops would not advance beyond the line presently occupied, extending from Novograd-Volynsk and Olevsk in the south; along the rivers Ptich' and Berezina, including Bobruisk, in the center; to the Berezina Canal and the river Dvina in the north (see Map 2). This meant that the Poles were content to keep the western and middle parts of Volhynia, and most of Minsk Province, as well as Wilno and Grodno Provinces. The Bolsheviks would keep Podolia, Kiev Province, and East Volhynia in the Southwestland as well as Vitebsk and Mogilev provinces, together with the eastern edges of Minsk Province, in the Northwestland. To avoid clashes between the two armies, Piłsudski actually "advised" the Soviets to create a ten-kilometer neutral zone by withdrawing their troops.

Moreover, the Polish leader categorically demanded that the Soviet government stop all Communist agitation among Polish troops. He also demanded that the Red Army not attack Petliura's troops. Again, he "advised" the Bolsheviks to withdraw their troops from Daugavpils and cede it to Latvia. If the Soviets created the neutral zone, stopped Communist agitation, and refrained from attacking Petliura, he would send an authorized delegate to Moscow to meet personally with Lenin. By presenting this mixture of demands and "advice," Piłsudski apparently wanted to test whether the Bolsheviks were serious about concluding a lasting peace or rather meant it as just another breathing spell, necessary to gather forces for an offensive. At the same time, he declared he did not believe in the Soviet government's discretion and in case of indiscretion he would take appropriate measures.

Finally, Piłsudski argued that negotiations between the Polish government and Denikin should not be viewed as an instance of breaking this declaration. As Boerner put it, "we must negotiate, but will never conclude an alliance with him," since the "support of Denikin in his struggle against the Bolsheviks cannot be Poland's *raison d'état*."[111]

Piłsudski realized, of course, that the restoration of Imperial Russia, at which Denikin and other White generals aimed, would present a mortal threat to his federation plans. The restored Russian Empire would naturally enough see all of the Borderlands as its exclusive domain,[112] leading to a conflict in which the Allies would surely be on the Russian side. Indeed, the Allies viewed as Polish only the Białystok region of the Borderlands. On 8 December 1919, they drew a line separating from the rest of the former Russian Empire the territory where Polish administration could be officially set up. West of this line lay Congress Poland, without the northern part of Suwałki Province, and the three Borderlands counties of Białystok, Bielsk and Sokółka (see Map 2). Although Polish rights to the territories east of this line were "expressly reserved,"[113] it

was quite clear that the Allies would be unwilling to recognize these rights, unless Russia were ruled by a hostile party (that is, the Bolsheviks). As matters stood, Piłsudski preferred to see Lenin in Moscow to Denikin.

At the same time, as he told Kossakowski on 13 November, he despised the Bolsheviks as those who "betray civilization, their own country, and one another." Most importantly, he did not trust them. "There can be no question of any diplomatic relations or negotiations because their fundamental condition is trust and discretion," and the Bolsheviks "do not deserve the former and do not know the latter."[114] As soon as he got Polish hostages, prisoners, refugees, and national treasures out of Russia, there would be left "nothing more to talk about" with them.[115]

On the very day Piłsudski uttered these words, Markhlevskii arrived in Moscow to present his terms to Lenin and Trotsky.[116] A day later, the Politburo recognized these terms as "generally . . . acceptable, with the exception of the clause about the stopping of military operations against Petliura." This was to be rejected on the grounds that Moscow had already begun separate negotiations with him, although it agreed to conduct them mainly in order to compromise him with the Entente.[117] The Bolsheviks, who had not really given the Poles any unequivocal expression of *désintéressement* with regard to Lithuania and Belarus, were even less inclined to give it with respect to Ukraine. Now that the critical moment was over and Denikin was withdrawing, they saw no reason to make even greater concessions than those already offered. Most importantly, Moscow did not want to allow Piłsudski to realize his federalist concept.

Having returned to Mikaszewicze, Markhlevskii presented to Captain Boerner the Soviet "counterproposal" on 23 November, aiming at changing the terms outlined by Piłsudski. Markhlevskii's armistice line was drawn west of the Berezina Canal, thus differing substantially from the Piłsudski line in view of this area's great strategic importance.[118] Polish troops were to withdraw to create the neutral zone along the Dvina. As for Petliura, the counterproposal declared he had given Moscow an offer of coming to terms, and consequently could not be "the object of negotiation between the Polish and Soviet governments." The issue of Daugavpils should also be dropped in view of direct Soviet-Latvian negotiations, then in process. The Soviets would not carry out Communist agitation by "state means." This was to mean that "the Soviet government can refrain from agitation conducted by the army but cannot forbid the Party to conduct agitation."[119]

Captain Boerner, having taken this counterproposal to Warsaw, presented to Markhlevskii Piłsudski's reply on 29 November. It is noteworthy that the reply as recorded in Boerner's memoir differs significantly from that contained

in Markhlevskii's report to Lenin.[120] According to the report, Piłsudski did not want to bargain about the armistice line. His original "voluntary statement" had simply reflected his decision not to order Polish troops to advance beyond that line. As for the neutral zone, it had just been his "advice" to avoid getting involved unintentionally in battle. If the Soviet government saw a concession in the withdrawal of its troops, demanding a reciprocal concession elsewhere, he would "take back his advice." As to Daugavpils, he also withdrew his advice, warning that should the Latvians ask for military assistance in capturing this strategic town, Poland would help them. Moreover, he was not going to allow the Bolsheviks to finish off Petliura and would "defend him by force of arms, if attacked." As for agitation, Piłsudski considered the Soviet formula to be vague and leaving an ample loophole. He believed that "Soviet power, supported by terror unheard of in the world, was sufficiently strong to order its subjects and adherents to carry out certain actions or refrain from them."[121]

Overall, Piłsudski concluded that the Soviets were trying to draw him "into far-reaching negotiations and even agreements," unwilling to understand that he was conducting these "talks" informally, taking upon himself all consequences, and facing opposition at home.[122] In view of this clear lack of understanding for the "method" chosen by him, he considered sending a representative to Moscow to be useless. He would, however, send one if requested by the Soviets, provided they showed that they were sincere. He would begin trusting them only on the basis of the following "facts": (1) their release of the hostages, and precise observance of the terms of the Red Cross agreement; (2) the peaceful behavior of Bolshevik troops at the front line; (3) their being discreet about the talks; and (4) the absence of Soviet-organized agitation in Poland.

Trying nonetheless to continue negotiations, Markhlevskii asked to see Piłsudski personally. The difficulty was that such a meeting could only take place in secret; accordingly, Boerner left for Warsaw to prepare the visit. In the meantime, the negotiations of the Red Cross delegations in Mikaszewicze reached stalemate, as the hostages were yet to be released by the Soviets.[123] In addition, Moscow demanded the introduction of changes in the agreement on the exchange of civilian prisoners, already worked out and ready to be signed. To make matters worse, Soviet troops were completely unprepared to conclude local armistice agreements, as previously agreed.[124]

It appeared that for the Soviets to sign an agreement was one thing, while to implement it or to keep it was quite another.[125] Kossakowski believed that the Soviet authorities had "deceived" Markhlevskii. On 13 December, the Polish delegation suspended negotiations in view of "a certain sabotaging of the implementation of the delegations' resolutions that let itself to be felt in at least

some spheres of the Soviet government." The Polish delegates feared that their Soviet counterparts, in an effort to cover their breach of the terms of the signed agreement, might at any moment break off the negotiations in a spectacular way, while putting the blame on the Poles.[126] On the same day, Markhlevskii received a message from Warsaw that his meeting with Piłsudski was "presently" not possible. The Soviet representative left for Moscow on the very next day, convinced that the termination of negotiations had come as a result of the most recent change of government in Warsaw.[127]

The string of Polish military successes in the spring and summer of 1919 put Piłsudski in a position to try to implement his federalist idea. The capture of Wilno, the capital of the Northwestland and the historical capital of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was especially important. While Lithuania consistently rejected his offers of exchanging the city for a federation, the subsequent capture of Minsk made it possible for the Polish leader to make substantial progress in winning over Belarus to the idea of federation with Poland. Paradoxically, the victorious end of fighting in East Galicia allowed him likewise to press forward with the concept of an alliance between Poland and Dnieper Ukraine. Thus, while significant obstacles, internal and external, were still in the way, the federalist idea did not appear to be unrealistic, provided the anti-Entente Bolsheviks remained in power in Russia.

Accordingly, Piłsudski welcomed the missions of Markhlevskii in the summer and fall of 1919. He wanted to help the Bolsheviks repulse Denikin's offensive by letting them transfer troops from the Polish front against him. At the same time, he tried to use Poland's position of strength to make them acquiesce in his intention to implement the federalist concept. Yet, Piłsudski very much distrusted the Soviets, suspecting that all they wanted was simply a breathing spell. While he tried to use the Markhlevskii missions to establish some modicum of mutual understanding and trust,[128] he clearly was not optimistic. His attempt to get practical concessions from the Soviets, such as the release of Polish hostages, exchange of prisoners, and the return of Polish refugees as well as property and cultural treasures, was intended as a convenient trial balloon to gauge Moscow's sincerity.

As for reaching peace between Poland and Soviet Russia, Piłsudski did not even consider such an eventuality. An unprecedented peace agreement with Soviet Russia at a time when Denikin, supported by the Allies, still had a chance of victory, would have adversely impacted Polish relations with them. Since friendly relations with France were the cornerstone of Polish foreign policy, no Polish leader could have gone that far. The most Piłsudski could offer the

Bolsheviks was tacit benevolent neutrality. Even his unofficial dialogue with the Soviets was secret, as it occurred under the cover of Red Cross negotiations.

The Soviets, like Piłsudski, were not really interested in reaching peace. The Markhlevskii missions were intended to forestall another major Polish offensive which might have been fatal to the Bolsheviks, given their critical situation on the Denikin front. They made their peace offer to distract the Polish leader, counting on what they saw as his "adventurer's way of thinking." They did it without much hope but, after all, they had nothing to lose. Causing a split between Poland and the Allies would have been a great diplomatic success for the Soviets. This is why they tried to draw Piłsudski into protracted negotiations. Their initial offer was rather vague and did not seem to be very attractive or sacrificial, since Poland already possessed Wilno, Grodno, and Minsk. Moreover, once the Soviets learned from Piłsudski that it was in Poland's own interest to help them beat Denikin, they cautiously rejected his demands. They considered their present military weakness to be passing, expecting that their victory over Denikin would improve their situation vastly.[129] Therefore, the Bolsheviks were not prepared to accept Piłsudski's unilateral conditions. In particular, they had no intention of acquiescing in the implementation of the Polish leader's federalist concept, as they opposed his plans for supporting Ukraine and Latvia in their struggle for separation from Russia.

Soviet rejection of Piłsudski's conditions indicated that he would not get what he wanted without a fight. At the same time, Soviet unwillingness or inability to implement the signed agreements must have confirmed his deep-seated conviction that the Bolsheviks could not be trusted. Thus, any attempt at compromising with them would be very risky. Most importantly, however, in Piłsudski's view, Soviet military weakness in relation to Poland was lasting. Consequently, there was no need to settle for a compromise. Considering all of this, further negotiations made no sense. The only way to extract desired concessions was to defeat the Bolsheviks on the battlefield after their victory over Denikin.

CHAPTER III

Official Soviet Peace Offers

The Polish–Latvian Offensive in Latgalia

With Denikin's final defeat clearly on the horizon toward the end of 1919, Piłsudski began preparations for the final and decisive phase of the war.[1] The first step was to strengthen the northern flank, which was in a precarious position, being surrounded on the east and northeast by the Bolsheviks, and on the northwest by hostile Lithuanian troops. This was to be done by ejecting the Soviets from Latgalia, thus establishing a common border with friendly Latvia. The direct Polish–Latvian link would also isolate Soviet Russia from both Lithuania and German volunteer troops, still remaining in western Latvia. This was very important to the Poles, who feared the possibility of Soviet–German and Soviet–Lithuanian cooperation.[2] Already in late November 1919, Piłsudski had sent his military envoys to Riga to finalize an agreement on a joint military operation in Latgalia, aimed at capturing the fortress of Daugavpils. Such an operation was first planned to take place in early and then mid-December, but Latvian troops needed more time to prepare. Finally, the military agreement was signed in Riga on 30 December.[3]

The Bolsheviks, aware of those preparations, signed an armistice with Estonia on the next day, which allowed them to move troops from the Estonian front to Latgalia.[4] These reinforcements notwithstanding, the joint Polish–Latvian offensive, begun on 3 January 1920, proceeded successfully. Since the participating Polish troops were three times stronger than the Latvian, the whole operation was commanded by General Śmigły-Rydz. The main attacking force was provided by two Polish Legionary divisions, which took the fortress

of Daugavpils on the same day. The defeated Bolshevik troops, however, managed to avoid encirclement and to organize counterattacks.[5] It became clear that Polish-Latvian military cooperation must continue until Bolshevik troops were ejected from all of Latgalia. On 16 January, a new agreement was signed between the two sides,[6] and, five days later, the Latvians took Rezekne, and subsequently Ludza. The Bolsheviks responded by mounting a decisive counterattack,[7] which failed, and, by the end of January, all of Latgalia was occupied by Polish and Latvian troops.[8] At this point, Riga, having no designs on any territories beyond Latgalia, decided to extricate itself from the conflict. Accordingly, a secret Latvian-Soviet armistice was signed in Moscow on 30 January 1920.[9] However, since neither the Poles nor the lower-level Latvian commanders were informed about it, fighting stopped only several days later.

The First Soviet Peace Offer

While the Poles and Latvians were preparing their joint offensive in Latgalia, Chicherin made an unexpected official peace offer to Poland. His note was sent on 22 December 1919, just a week after the ultimate failure of the Markhlevskii mission. It referred to an interpellation made in Parliament about a month earlier by members representing the Polish Socialist Party who wanted to know whether Poland had received any peace offers from Soviet Russia. Deputy Foreign Minister Władysław Skrzyński replied then that Moscow had not made any peace proposals, and that although the government desired peace, it could not assume that "the enemy would at the present moment agree to conditions corresponding to our just demands." Chicherin declared now in his note that, already in April 1919, Soviet Russia had assured Poland through Więckowski "about its unalterable desire to put an end to bloodshed between the peoples of Russia and Poland." Presently, having in view "the establishment of peaceful and friendly relations between the two peoples," the Soviet government was making "an official offer to begin negotiations aimed at concluding a firm and lasting peace."[10]

There can be no doubt that this offer was made in bad faith, coming just a few days after the fiasco of the Markhlevskii mission. It was more likely intended to embarrass Polish ruling circles with the working class and the parties of the Left.[11] Making a peace offer just to embarrass another government was certainly in Chicherin's diplomatic repertoire,[12] but the timing implies that the Soviets also wanted to mobilize public opinion against war on the eve of the Polish-Latvian offensive in Latgalia. Polish troops had already been concentrating for this operation in early December, and the Soviets knew it[13]—the more

so, since Piłsudski had openly forewarned them of such a possibility during the abortive negotiations at Mikaszewicze. One must also consider that Moscow perceived the new Polish government of Leopold Skulski to be both virulently anti-Bolshevik and decidedly pro-Entente. Of further concern to the Soviets was the appointment of General Józef Leśniewski, a known anti-Bolshevik, as minister of war.[14] Thus, their peace offer can be safely assumed to have been meant exclusively as a propaganda gesture.

This move indeed turned out to be quite troublesome to Polish ruling circles, for at least two reasons.[15] First, the Poles did not want to negotiate since they distrusted Soviet Russia, whose war commissar, Trotsky, asserted in an interview, given to the *Internationale Communiste* on 15 December, that he would "swoop on Poland" as soon as he "finished off Denikin."[16] Second, they could not negotiate owing to their relations with the Allies, and especially with the French, who in early January 1920 advised the new Polish foreign minister, Stanisław Patek, not to enter into any exchanges with the Bolsheviks.[17] As a result, the offer remained unanswered.

The Second Soviet Peace Offer

The situation, however, fundamentally changed just a couple of weeks later. On 16 January, the Supreme Council, including Great Britain, France, the United States, and Italy, lifted the blockade of Soviet Russia. Another Soviet peace offer followed on 28 January. The note, signed by Lenin, Chicherin, and Trotsky, asserted that Soviet policy toward Poland was "not based on fortuitous and temporary military maneuvers and diplomatic schemes but on the unshakeable principle of national self-determination." Soviet Russia unconditionally recognized Polish independence and sovereignty. Confirming the peace offer of 22 December, Moscow, "devoid of any aggressive intentions," declared that Bolshevik troops would not advance to the west of the present front line (that is, the line extending from Drissa, Dzisna, and Polotsk in the north; through Borisov, Parichi, Ptich', and Belokorovichi in the center; to Chudnov, Piliava, Derazhnia, and Bar in the south). This line was almost identical with the Piłsudski line of 6 November (see Map 2). Moreover, the declaration affirmed that Soviet Russia had not concluded with Germany any agreement directed against Poland, since such an agreement would be against the very nature of Soviet foreign policy. This statement was meant to be a veiled threat that such an agreement would be pursued by the Soviets if their offer were to be rejected. Overall, Moscow expressed hope that "all questions in dispute will be resolved in a spirit of good neighborly relations."[18]

Many Polish politicians and military figures, considering this offer to reflect Soviet military helplessness and popular pressure for peace, believed that the Bolshevik leadership meant the Polish-Soviet border to be drawn along the line specified in this note.[19] It appears, however, that such an interpretation is erroneous.[20] As Ioffe pointed out to Dąbski later, at Riga, the Soviet declaration "talked only about a demarcation line, rather than the border line which would have to be entirely different."[21] Moreover, the note emphasized that Moscow intended the proposed peace agreement with Poland to be based on the principle of national self-determination, and not on the current military situation at the front line, declared to be "fortuitous and temporary." As is well known, the Bolsheviks did not at all think that Poland's ethnic border in the east could be drawn near Polotsk, Borisov, Bobruisk, Ptich', Novograd-Volynsk, and Bar. The most that the Soviets could have given Poland based on the principle of national self-determination was the Białystok region, adding perhaps some territories immediately east of the 8 December line. It seems equally clear that the Bolsheviks would not have accepted Poland's acting on behalf of Ukraine and Belarus. After all, in November, when their military situation was much more difficult, they rejected Piłsudski's protectorate over Petliura. This line of reasoning is supported by Ioffe's declaration, made as the head of the Soviet peace delegation during the negotiations with Latvia, that "based on factual possession and military conquest of territory, one can never establish peaceful relations; it would be possible to establish them only in the case that one side were utterly defeated, and then—it is peace only until another war."[22]

Although the situation at the Polish front was not favorable to the Bolsheviks, they did not at all consider themselves defeated. Ever since the early spring of 1919, they had treated the Polish front as secondary, while directing their main efforts at defeating the White generals supported by the Entente—a task largely accomplished by January 1920. At this point, as Lenin put it later,

> our conviction ripened that the Entente's military offensive against us was over, that the defensive war with imperialism had ended, and that we had won it. The stake was Poland. . . . We faced a new task. The defensive period of the war with worldwide imperialism was over, and we could, and had the obligation to, exploit the military situation to launch an offensive war. We had defeated them when they advanced against us; we would now try to advance against them in order to assist the sovietization of Poland. . . . We decided to use our military forces to assist the sovietization of Poland. Our subsequent overall policy flowed from this [decision]. We formulated it not in an official resolution recorded in the minutes of the Central Committee . . . but we said among ourselves that we must probe with bayonets whether the social revolution of the proletariat in Poland had ripened.[23]

Lenin's testimony is indirectly confirmed by the 2 February declaration of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to the Polish people, stating that "Poland's freedom is a necessary condition of Russia's free development. . . . We are deeply convinced that the working people of all countries will enter the path which the Russian working people have already entered." As Poltorak rightly points out, to the Bolshevik leadership, a free Poland meant a Soviet Poland, free from the bourgeois yoke and ruled by the Communist Party in the interests of the toiling masses.[24]

Another indirect confirmation is given by Chicherin's and Lenin's reaction to the interview with Vladimir P. Zatonskii, the member of the Ukrainian Revolutionary-Military Committee, published by Moscow's newspaper *Vechernye Izvestiia* on 26 January. Zatonskii asserted that "only having secured [the Southwestland] will we be able to help the Hungarian and German comrades to finish off the Polish nobility." Chicherin condemned the publication of the interview on the grounds that it had not been duly censored by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and might be exploited by the Poles to argue that Soviet Russia was preparing an offensive which must, in turn, be forestalled. Lenin agreed with Chicherin and ordered that the paper's editor be punished. Neither, however, suggested for a moment that Zatonskii should be censured, as it would have been unthinkable to punish him for saying what every leading Bolshevik assumed to be true and proper. That this was how high-ranking Bolsheviks felt about the matter is also shown by the reaction of the head of the ROSTA, the official Soviet press agency. P. M. Kerzhentsev reported back to Lenin that the responsible editor had just been fired, adding that a typographical error "changed substantially the meaning" of Zatonskii's statement, which should have read, "to help the Hungarian and German comrades, and to finish off the Polish nobility." Lenin was satisfied with this response.

A still further indirect confirmation is contained in Chicherin's letter of 14 February, revealing that the Bolshevik military command in Ukraine intended to carry out offensive military actions in the Polish part of the Southwestland, in breach of the peace offer of 28 January. At the same time, Stalin, apparently preparing another offensive action, wanted Soviet Russia to initiate relations with the East Galicians and to promise them independence.[25]

Although the decision had been made to Sovietize Poland with the help of the Red Army, the reality was that Bolshevik troops at the Polish front were at the moment much weaker than their Polish counterparts. To finish off Denikin, and then to transfer the main forces from the North Caucasus to the Polish front and get them ready for an offensive, required time. According to the original plan of the Soviet Field Staff, prepared in January 1920, even a moderate

offensive would not be feasible before mid- or late April.[26] In the meantime, the Bolsheviks feared another Polish winter offensive, like the one in Latgalia.[27] They knew, moreover, that Piłsudski had become a protector of Petliura, whose Ukrainian government resided now on Polish soil, and realized that such an alliance could only be offensive, considering the circumstances. The Soviets thus had to take into account the possibility of a significant Polish spring offensive in the Southwestland.

In this situation, it was the task of Soviet diplomacy to disorganize Polish preparations for an offensive, and perhaps even to dissuade the Poles from offensive actions altogether. Moreover, by skillfully using the propaganda aspect of their "demonstrative" diplomacy, the Bolsheviks intended to estrange the "toiling masses" from Polish ruling circles, and to help create a revolutionary situation.[28] Poland's Sovietization from within, as a result of an internal revolution "helped" by moderate pressure applied in the Borderlands by the Red Army, would of course have been preferable. If, however, it came to all-out war, it was, as Chicherin put it, "absolutely necessary that the blame be laid entirely on the Polish government. This is necessary so that we could influence in a decisive manner the state of mind of the Polish intermediate [*promezhutochnye*] classes, and our own masses."[29]

Soviet Preparations for a Spring Offensive

The first plan of the Bolshevik offensive on the Polish front was prepared in the very first weeks of 1920 by the head of the operational department of the Field Staff, Boris M. Shaposhnikov, at the request of the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Republic (Revvoensoviet). On 27 January, that is, a day before the Soviet peace offer to Poland, it was presented by the new supreme commander, Sergei S. Kamenev, to Trotsky, who was head of the Revvoensoviet. Considering that Bolshevik troops were still engaged at the Caucasian and Crimean fronts, the author of the plan admitted that "one cannot yet talk about a large-scale offensive in the west." Nonetheless, he planned "decisive and energetic strikes from our side," aiming at wresting from Poland the strategic initiative and forcing it onto the defensive. The main strike was to be made from the Drissa—Polotsk—Lepel' area in the north, in the direction of Minsk, in mid- or late April.[30]

While the proposed offensive in the Northwestland could give Soviet Russia the long-desired direct contact with Germany, the Bolsheviks planned also an auxiliary strike in the Southwestland. Accordingly, on 14 February, Lenin showed great interest in the measures proposed by Stalin "for the creation of a Galician striking force."[31] The Bolshevik leader believed that "in taking

Galicia, which has a connection to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where things are seething—by doing this—we are opening a direct road for revolution."[32] On 10 March, Supreme Commander Kamenev gave Shaposhnikov's plan to the Western Front commander, Vladimir Gittis, for realization.[33] The Soviet offensive was at this point rescheduled to begin on 5 May.[34] At the same time, large amounts of money and much effort were expended on spreading Bolshevik propaganda among Polish troops.[35] Local commanders, tired of successive withdrawals, thirsted for an offensive. For instance, the commissar of the 12th Army, N. I. Muralov, pointed out to the front commissar that "before conducting peace negotiations with them, it is necessary to punch them in the snout."[36] Not everything was so crystal-clear, however.

To be sure, Lenin's "fundamental policy" was to "use every opportunity to go from the defense to the offense."[37] Now that Denikin's troops had nearly been finished off, such an opportunity was at hand. Hence, the energetic buildup of Red Army forces on the Polish front, which had proceeded since December 1919.[38] On 27 February, Lenin ordered the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Western Front to "prepare for war against Poland."[39] That this was meant as an offensive war is clear from Lenin's subsequent telegram to Stalin insisting that "it is essential to speed up maximally the capture of the Crimea in order to have entirely free hands, as a civil war in Germany may force us to move west to aid the Communists."[40] Bolshevik offensive intentions are also confirmed by Supreme Commander Kamenev's recommendation made to Lenin on 20 March to move Mikhail N. Tukhachevskii from his present command of the Caucasian Front to the command of the Western Front "just before decisive operations." The replacement of Gittis, who had no experience in offensive actions, was essential, "in view of the importance of the Polish front and in view of the seriousness of forthcoming operations here." Tukhachevskii was praised by the supreme commander as an offensive specialist who "has skillfully and decisively carried out the recent operations of routing Denikin's army."[41]

Still, the Bolshevik leadership realized that an all-out offensive against Poland would be a risky undertaking. Trotsky, for instance, pointed out to Lenin on 9 March that such an offensive might become a pretext for military intervention by the Entente, threatening the existence of Soviet power itself.[42] Moreover, Polish Bolsheviks in Russia had warned Lenin as early as January 1920 that once the Red Army approached Poland proper, the Poles would begin a "national war," as the peasant masses would unite with the followers of the National Democrats, fearing restoration of Russian rule and the specter of communism.[43] To avoid this danger, Polish Bolsheviks strongly advised adopting the following two-pronged tactic: first, agitation for both peace and communism must be

intensified in Poland, aimed at creating a general revolutionary situation and causing the Polish Army to disintegrate; second, that army must suffer a serious defeat to serve as a catalyst for this disintegration.[44]

Polish Bolsheviks warned, however, that "a large-scale offensive is dangerous because it would be difficult to halt the army at a given moment, while its approach to the ethnic borders of Poland will no doubt create in Poland a new storm of nationalism, affecting not only the bourgeoisie but also a significant part of the working class, and poisoning it with the idea of 'defending the Fatherland' against the 'Muscovites.' There is no doubt that communism [in Poland] would suffer a heavy blow lasting many years."[45] Chicherin fully agreed with this reasoning, pointing out to Lenin on 22 April that: "(1) The situation requires, first and foremost, the continuation of our policy of peace offers; what we have so far achieved is that not only [Polish] working masses but also the petite bourgeoisie stops believing in 'the aggressive strivings of the Bolsheviks' and begins to be skeptical about defense propaganda; it is necessary to support this attitude . . . (2) . . . Our successful partial offensive will help the disintegration of the Polish Army; conversely, a major offensive including invasion of Poland proper will poison with the spirit of defense even a significant part of the working class." Lenin, as well as Trotsky, fully agreed with this plan of action.[46]

The Polish Peace Terms

Warsaw was naturally aware of the propagandist aspect of the Soviet peace offer.[47] Still, it was impossible to ignore the offer, as the international situation had significantly changed since December. The Entente no longer wanted to fight Soviet Russia, as Britain had just adopted a new policy of "peace through trade," while France seemed rather disoriented. Both Allied Powers gave Poland a largely free hand in the matter, London emphasizing its preference for peace, and Paris advising a rather impossible policy of "barbed wire," meaning in effect neither war nor peace.[48] Considering also that on 2 February 1920 Soviet Russia signed a peace treaty with Estonia, the first such an agreement with a "bourgeois" state, it was clear that Warsaw suddenly found itself in a position to make the choice between war and peace fully on its own.[49] On 4 February, Foreign Minister Patek officially confirmed receipt of the Soviet peace offer and promised to send a reply.[50]

There was a difference of attitude, however, between the government and Piłsudski. As Kossakowski put it, "Patek and Piłsudski make peace. Piłsudski does not believe in it, Patek does. Piłsudski agrees to Patek's peacemaking but does not permit himself to be disarmed." The Chief of State thus continued

to be distrustful of the Bolsheviks. His distrust appeared to be justified and was in fact shared by Poland's informal ally, France, whose leaders advised the Poles "not to trust the word of the Soviets," pointing out that "one could not obtain normal guarantees" from them. Given this lack of trust, Warsaw decided that Poland had "to be ready for peace, and for warlike action." Accordingly, Piłsudski was to begin military preparations for an offensive in the Southwestland, before the Soviets had time to concentrate their forces on the Polish front. By attacking first and exploiting the superiority of Polish forces in the short run, the Poles hoped to disrupt Soviet preparations for an offensive and destroy the bulk of the Bolshevik troops, forcing Moscow to concede to Poland a victor's peace.[51]

At the same time, the government was working out Polish terms of peace. The possibility of Soviet Russia's conceding to Poland a victor's peace without a fight seemed remote, but nonetheless had to be explored. Polish terms, therefore, tended to be maximalist, and allowed Piłsudski to proceed with his federalist program. On 11 February, a list of preliminary conditions for negotiations was drawn up by a special committee of the Foreign Ministry, including Patek and Wasilewski. The primary condition was Russia's renunciation of territories acquired through the partitions of Poland.[52] Accordingly, the Red Army was to withdraw beyond the Polish pre-partition border of 1772. The territory vacated by the Bolsheviks would be administered by Poland jointly with representatives of four countries, two invited by Warsaw, and two by Moscow. This temporary administration would organize the territory in accordance with the principle of national self-determination. Thus, the main Polish condition was formulated quite cleverly, considering that the Allies applied similar solutions of outstanding territorial questions elsewhere at this time, for example in Upper Silesia. It also incorporated the Soviet demand that the peace be based on the principle of self-determination.[53] Other conditions included Soviet recognition of and noninterference with the national states established within the borders of the former Russian Empire;[54] renunciation of revolutionary propaganda outside the Soviet borders; and reparations for losses caused by the Russian-enforced evacuations of 1914–1915, by the Revolution of 1917, and by Bolshevik troops in the present war.[55]

These preliminary conditions were presented to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee on 23 February. The discussion revealed that the National Democratic minority of the committee viewed the 1772 border as an idle notion. This led Premier Skulski to explain that a recognition of this border was meant as a point of departure for further negotiations. In the end, the committee adopted a vaguely worded approval.[56]

Skulski presented his views more fully during the session of the government on 8 March. Soviet withdrawal beyond the 1772 border would be Poland's maximum demand. The minimum demand in the Northwestland would be the "security line," drawn somewhere between the "present strategic line" (that is, the current front line) and the 1772 border.[57] If Poland obtained its maximum, then only Warsaw would determine how the Borderlands population would express its will. If, however, it only got the security line, then Poland would determine how the local population on its side would express its will, and demand that Russia likewise allow its Borderlands population to express its will.

Latgalia, being within the 1772 border, would be formally ceded by Poland to Latvia. However, Poland would receive the eastern half of Ilükste County of Courland, just south of Daugavpils, where, according to both Polish and Latvian statistics, the number of Poles was several times that of Latvians.[58]

In the Southwestland, Poland would support the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state with its western border along the rivers Zbrucz and Styr, meaning that neither East Galicia nor West Volhynia would belong to this state. Temporarily, this border might be drawn along the river Horyń, slightly to the east of the Styr (see Map 2). Ukraine's eastern border would be determined directly between it and Russia. Poland would not fight a war to acquire any territory for Ukraine but would cede to it those territories within the 1772 border that it would get from Russia by negotiations or by force of arms.

Furthermore, following the peace treaty with Soviet Russia, Poland would define its border with Lithuania, leaving Wilno on the Polish side. The idea of establishing a Belarusian state federated with Poland was to be dropped. Instead, Belarusians would get a measure of self-rule, as well as cultural concessions in the Minsk region and territories farther to the east. The Wilno and Grodno regions would be included in Poland without any concessions to Belarusians, with possible exceptions in some counties.

The Polish peace delegation would consist of four representatives of the government and four members of Parliament, invited by the government. The place of negotiations should be close to the front line, to ensure easy communications for both delegations with their respective governments.

While Skulski mentioned that he had already agreed with Piłsudski on the points related to Belarus and Lithuania, it appears that all these conditions had been approved by the Chief of State.[59] Polish territorial demands having thus been formulated at the highest level, the Polish stand on remaining points was subsequently worked out in detail by a special task force, which included Wasilewski. Polish demands on these points were maximalist, to provide bargaining room. At the same time, as Wasilewski admitted, "most of

these demands are formulated as if they were addressed to a state most utterly defeated by Poland." Some even encroached upon Russia's internal affairs and intruded upon its sovereignty. For instance, the Red Army was to be unilaterally reduced by half, while its professional military cadres were not to exceed seventy-five thousand.[60]

The Poles were not at all certain whether these harsh terms, even if somewhat mitigated in the process of negotiation, would be acceptable to Soviet Russia. Piłsudski, for one, did not believe that they would.[61] The government, however, did not appear to be cynical or insincere;[62] indeed, Polish political circles tended to believe that these conditions were a useful basis for further negotiations.[63] This conviction was likely a result of the widely held, though erroneous, assumption that the line cited in the Soviet offer of 28 January 1920 was meant to be an initial border proposal, and that Moscow would probably be willing to make some concessions.

Having finally worked out desirable terms of peace, Patek replied to Chicherin on 27 March that a Polish peace delegation would be ready to meet their Soviet counterparts on 10 April at Borisov, a Polish-occupied town on the front line, lying on the main railroad line linking Minsk with Smolensk, and thus Warsaw with Moscow. For the duration of negotiations, a local armistice would be declared.[64]

The Soviet Reaction

Already in late February, Lenin had an approximate idea of the conditions the Poles were then formulating. He assessed them as "absolutely unrealizable, even impudent."[65] Lenin believed that 16 January, the day the Supreme Council lifted the blockade of Soviet Russia, marked Bolshevik victory over the Allied Powers. In the face of its "full disintegration," the Entente was "definitely helpless to do anything to us," he maintained. Having defeated the Allies, and aware that "every month gives our forces a gigantic shot in the arm," Lenin was not in the slightest mood to concede such harsh terms to Poland, which he considered merely a "small state," crippled by internal difficulties and intense class conflict.[66]

Indeed, Polish Communists assured him that "the peace offer of the Soviet government has acted above all expectations as regards revolutionization of the toiling masses. . . . [During an audience with Piłsudski and Skulski,] trade union representatives threatened a general strike if the government would not get down to peace negotiations. . . . Such a threat shows to what extent the slogan 'Peace with Russia!' acts as a tool for revolutionizing the masses." The Polish Communists further pointed out that "the Polish Army ought to be immediately

and soundly defeated"; however, since this was not possible for the time being, Bolshevik troops at the Polish front ought to be strengthened "by all possible means." At the same time, it was crucial "to continue simultaneously the policy of peace, which has brought such beneficial results."[67]

Overall, it appeared to the Bolsheviks that their policy of peace offers had already achieved much success. The toiling masses not only in Poland, but also in the West, tended to believe in Soviet Russia's sincere desire for peace, while having significant doubts about Poland's attitude in this respect. Their primary task having thus been accomplished, the Soviets felt no particular need to engage in actual peace negotiations. However, as the Poles had already elaborated their peace conditions in response to the Bolsheviks' invitation, now it was the latter's turn to reply to those conditions. Since Moscow considered them utterly unacceptable, it would have to be the side breaking off negotiations. Yet, nothing was to be gained from that in the propaganda war.

Most importantly, a local armistice in the Borisov sector of the front line, the site proposed by the Poles for negotiations, would thwart Bolshevik preparations for the offensive in the Northwestland, underway since 10 March. At the same time, the Poles would be free to proceed with their offensive in the Southwestland. It was therefore vital that the negotiations not be held in Borisov, if they were held at all.[68] Accordingly, Chicherin's reply to Patek, on 28 March, demanded that the negotiations be held on neutral ground, in Estonia, and that an armistice cover the entire Polish-Soviet front.[69]

Such a general armistice, however, was unacceptable to Piłsudski, whose plan was to strike the Bolsheviks before they completed their preparations for an offensive. The Poles realized, of course, that "every month gives [Bolshevik] forces a gigantic shot in the arm," as Lenin said, and that time was on the enemy's side. In the ensuing exchange of notes, Patek pointed out that concluding a proper general armistice agreement required time-consuming negotiations. Besides, it was the Soviets themselves who had asked the Poles to determine the time and place of negotiations, indicating no preference on their part. In response, Chicherin claimed that the Polish government "is solely to blame for all the calamities that continuation of the war will bring on the toiling masses of both countries, and for every drop of blood that will be shed on either side."[70]

Piłsudski's Quest for Borderlands Allies

While Patek was busy dealing with the Soviets, Piłsudski worked on enlisting allies among the Borderlands nations. In the wake of the successful Polish-Latvian offensive in Latgalia, Poland suggested a defensive military convention between them

against Soviet Russia and Lithuania.[71] More broadly, the Poles intended to conclude with Latvia a defensive political-military alliance against Russia and Germany, to be later extended to all states on the Soviet western border, from Finland to Romania.[72] This alliance would include trade, transit, and monetary conventions. Furthermore, the Poles wanted to get some concessions, including the eastern half of Ilükste County in Courland; a lease on a few piers in the ports of Riga and Liepaja, coupled with certain privileges on railroads to these ports; and a guarantee that the Polish minority in Latgalia would be compensated in the event of radical land reform.[73] The Latvians, however, declined. Given Poland's ambitions as a regional power, its numerous enemies, and its continuing war against Soviet Russia, such an alliance would be risky at best. Latvia could not agree, either, to Polish control of eastern Ilükste County, as it claimed all of Courland on historical principle.[74]

The prospects for a meaningful alliance with the Belarusians did not look much better. At the end of 1919, the Belarusian movement suffered a split over the issues of nation-building and relations with Poland. In November, the Belarusian radical Left, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries, judging its social goals as superseding national ones, concluded an agreement with the Bolsheviks. Cooperation with the Bolsheviks in fighting the Poles was to be rewarded by sharing in the future Soviet government of Belarus.[75] Subsequently, the radical Left, commanding only a minority in the Belarusian Rada, attempted to gain control of the entire body by allying with a group of radical nationalists who accepted nothing short of independence. This led to a split in the Belarusian movement. The radicals created a People's Rada and a new quasi-government, headed by Vatslau Lastouski, which demanded Belarusian independence and a breakup with Poland.[76] The moderates, led by Lutskevich, formed the Supreme Rada. Although the radicals were fairly easily suppressed by the Poles, it was obvious that the Supreme Rada's authority, and that of Lutskevich personally, was substantially diminished. Belarusian mainstream nationalism was thus even weaker than had been supposed.

Piłsudski, exasperated by what he saw as Belarusian far-fetched political claims coupled with utter ineffectiveness, complained about "the fiction of Belarus."[77] In his view, Belarus was "still completely unprepared [for independence] and to come forth sharply with the Belarusian question would just compromise other, more important issues. It is necessary to create precedents and wait for suitable circumstances, establishing for the moment a Belarusian Piedmont in Poland."[78] The Civil Administration compared the Belarusian national movement to "a resourceless child."[79] Paradoxically, a plebiscite, originally planned by Piłsudski for January 1920, was put off because of the fear not

so much that Belarusians would vote against federation with Poland, but rather that the Poles of the Wilno and Grodno regions would overwhelmingly vote for incorporation.[80] At its session of 8 March 1920, the Polish government decided to give up the idea of establishing a Belarusian state; instead, the Belarusians were to enjoy local self-government and cultural autonomy in the Minsk region.[81] Accordingly, in confidential talks between the Supreme Rada and the Polish Foreign Ministry, held later that month, the Poles rejected all political demands but agreed to fund Belarusian educational and cultural activity in that region.[82] The Belarusians, not being in a position to argue, grudgingly accepted what was offered.

The situation looked somewhat more promising in Ukraine. Already at the end of 1919, the Poles had used their "position of strength" to pressure the Ukrainian foreign minister, Andrii Livyts'kyi, to issue a declaration of intent recognizing East Galicia and West Volhynia as Polish, as a basis for an alliance. Such a declaration, demanding in return Polish recognition of an independent Ukrainian People's Republic, was made on 2 December 1919. While it caused serious controversy among the Ukrainians, it was confirmed by Petliura a few days later.[83] Piłsudski responded by agreeing to begin immediately the work of reestablishing the Ukrainian army. Further political and military negotiations stalled, however. In view of repeated Bolshevik peace offers, the Poles apparently preferred to bide their time, keeping their options open. Moreover, the signing of a formal alliance with Petliura required some preparation, as it was sure to be opposed by the Entente and cause controversy at home.[84]

The Polish government finally decided the issue on 8 March 1920. Having secured East Galicia and West Volhynia for itself, Poland was to promote Ukrainian independence actively—without, however, engaging in war with the Bolsheviks beyond the Polish pre-partition border of 1772.[85] The idea was "to create an independent Ukrainian state and thus significantly weaken Russia by taking away from it territories abounding in grain and mineral riches."[86] Piłsudski intended to "counterpose Petliura's Ukraine to Rakovskii's Ukraine," and "let Ukrainians decide for themselves." In the end, even if an independent Ukraine were not viable, the attempt would cause enough problems for Russia to be worthwhile.[87]

Accordingly, in early April 1920 the Poles presented the Ukrainians with their terms of alliance. The ensuing negotiations nearly ended in failure, as Polish attempts to use their "position of strength" met with Ukrainian intransigence. Finally, only a dramatic five-hour meeting between Piłsudski and Petliura led to an agreement.[88] The alliance was signed on 21 April by Livyts'kyi and Jan Dąbski, the deputy foreign minister. Poland recognized the Ukrainian

People's Republic, headed by Petliura. The border between the two countries left East Galicia and West Volhynia on the Polish side.[89] Ukrainian and Polish national minorities on both sides of the border were to enjoy equal national and cultural rights. Until the agrarian question was solved by the future Ukrainian Constituent Assembly, the legal status of Polish landowners in Ukraine would be determined by a special agreement between the two countries.[90] Each government pledged not to conclude any agreement directed against the other. Finally, Poland "ceded" to Ukraine the territories between the new Polish-Ukrainian border and the old Polish border of 1772.[91]

Since most of these territories were at the time held by the Bolsheviks, a military convention, facilitating a joint military operation to "recover" them, was signed three days later. During the operation, Ukrainian troops were to be under Polish operational command. Poland was to arm and equip three Ukrainian divisions. The Ukrainian side was obliged to pay for the weapons and equipment, and to supply foodstuffs to Polish troops operating in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government was to organize its civilian and military administration in the "recovered" territories. Polish troops were to leave Ukraine on request of either of the two countries.[92]

The political alliance and the military convention were to be supplemented by an economic agreement. The Poles demanded several economic concessions, such as the control of two iron mines and one phosphorite mine. Negotiations, however, were slow and difficult, and, in the end, the agreement was never signed.[93] Overall, the alliance benefited both Poland and Dnieper Ukraine, establishing a framework for cooperation between the two countries. As is usually the case in international agreements between two partners of unequal strength, "the weaker side paid with concessions for the help and support received."[94] Precisely for that reason, its reception among Ukrainians was ambiguous. East Galicians, as expected, declared it a betrayal, but even some Dnieper Ukrainians opposed it. As for Poles, most were unsure of the alliance's merit. As one newspaper put it, "it is difficult to know today what Ukraine will become; as a matter of fact, we are just trying to guess what it may become."[95]

It is noteworthy, in this context, that Polish state-building experience in ethnically Ukrainian West Volhynia was hardly promising. The region had been under the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands, centered in Wilno, until January 1920, when it received its own commissioner general, Antoni Minkiewicz. Numerous Polish reports confirm that the situation here was much worse than in Polish Belarus. Local civil servants lacked good character, practicing favoritism and bribery; yet, it was difficult to replace them for lack of more suitable candidates. The administration was thus largely useless and only

antagonized the population.[96] A serious problem was also posed by the conflict between landowners, mainly Polish, and peasants, chiefly Ukrainian. As one report noted, "the landowners cling to their obsolete conservative beliefs, while the peasants, culturally undeveloped, do not understand any other solution to the agrarian question than to 'take away the lords' land and parcel it out.'"[97] In this conflict, the administration openly supported the landowners, thus alienating the other side. The situation was made even worse by unlawful requisitions and excesses committed by Polish troops and gendarmerie. Overall, given "the presently prevalent mood [of the population], it can be stated that a plebiscite would mean our defeat in Volhynia," concluded another Polish report.[98] Considering all of this, one can easily understand why a Polish newspaper wondered "how Poland, having difficulty organizing its own state, could manage to establish and sustain a Ukrainian state."[99]

Soviet Countermoves

The Soviets did not sit by passively while the Poles looked for allies in the Borderlands. Rather, they actively tried to draw them away from Poland by offering substantial concessions. Thus, in late December 1919, in anticipation of the Polish-Latvian offensive in Latgalia, Moscow intimated to Riga its willingness to sacrifice the region to conclude a peace with Latvia.[100] When the Latvians responded, sending an ostensible Red Cross delegation to Moscow in early January, it turned out the Bolsheviks merely wanted Latgalia to become a neutralized Soviet-Latvian condominium. In view of the successful Polish-Latvian offensive in Latgalia that by the end of January drove Soviet troops out of the region, this Soviet "sacrifice" was not acceptable. Negotiations continued, however, and, on 30 January 1920, Moscow and Riga signed a secret armistice resulting in the dissolution of the Soviet Latvian government that had resided in Latgalia.[101] Encouraged by this Soviet concession, Latvia sent an official peace delegation to Moscow in April.

The Bolsheviks likewise tried to lure Lithuania, offering it, in December 1919, 20 million marks per month for railroad transit to Germany. The next month, they even sweetened the offer, indicating they envisaged Lithuanian control over the railroad from Kaunas to Minsk through Wilno. This offer was difficult to resist, as the Entente no longer opposed peace with Soviet Russia. The Lithuanians acted with alacrity, since it was essential to conclude "peace with the Bolsheviks before the Poles will."[102] In February 1920, a Lithuanian "Red Cross" mission arrived in Moscow.[103] The Lithuanians wanted Soviet Russia, as the de facto heir to the Russian Empire, to recognize Lithuania as an independent state including the Polish-held regions of Wilno, Grodno, and

Suwałki. Not unnaturally, the Soviets intended to exchange this recognition for a military alliance against Poland. They therefore assured the Lithuanians that although they considered "the ethnographic principle as the basis for determining the borders of the Lithuanian state," they would make no difficulties about such "details" as "the national character of this or that city."[104]

As for Belarus, Moscow was successful, in late 1919, in attracting the Belarusian radical Left, especially the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Their cooperation in fighting the Poles was to be rewarded by inclusion in the future Soviet government of Belarus.[105] While the outcome of this agreement was not as beneficial to Soviet Russia as expected, since subsequently the Belarusian leftists joined the quasi-government of Lastouski supported by Lithuania, the mere split within the Belarusian movement surely worked in Moscow's favor.

Especially important for the Bolsheviks was Ukraine, where Soviet power was reestablished at the end of 1919 in the wake of Denikin's withdrawal. This time around, Lenin realized that a more sophisticated, double-pronged approach was required. On the one hand, the Politburo decided the Bolshevik Party was to begin "careful preparation of plans for merger of Ukraine and Russia."[106] On the other, Lenin insisted that the Party "must make concessions . . . on the national question," recognizing, "for the time being," an independent Soviet Ukraine, "in close federation" with Soviet Russia.[107] Such concessions were needed in view of the dissatisfaction with Moscow's previous Ukrainian policy among many ethnically Ukrainian Bolsheviks, especially those from Volhynia.[108]

Accordingly, on 29 November 1919 the Bolshevik Central Committee declared it "imposes upon all members of the Party the duty of facilitating in every way the removal of all obstacles to the free development of the Ukrainian language and culture." Nationalist tendencies "observable among the backward section of the Ukrainian masses" were to be counteracted with "the utmost patience and tact." It seems, however, that these qualities were unlikely to be found among Ukrainian Bolsheviks, most of whom were either recruited from, or tutored by, Red Army soldiers, assigned to reestablish Soviet power in Ukraine following the victory over Denikin.[109] Given that the majority of soldiers were ethnic Russians, it is no wonder the Central Committee directed that "steps should be taken immediately so that all Soviet institutions [in Ukraine] will have a sufficient number of employees familiar with the Ukrainian language."[110] In order to acquire a significant number of such Party members, Moscow decided in late November to form a "temporary bloc with the Borotbists."[111] This was indeed meant to be temporary, since already in mid-February the Bolshevik leadership resolved that the Borotbists would be "removed" from government by late April 1920.

The intended merger of Russia and Ukraine, however, was put on hold due to a combination of internal and external factors. First, rumors about Bolshevik plans for abolition of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic led to disorders in Kiev Province, forcing Rakovskii to try to "raise the authority of the Ukrainian government."[112] Even more importantly, in view of the rapprochement between Piłsudski and Petliura, aimed at the creation of an independent Ukraine, Moscow devised a plan to portray Soviet Ukraine as a sovereign republic.

On 9 February 1920, Chicherin pointed out to the Politburo that "it is necessary immediately, without a minute's delay, to reinstate the independence of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, putting off federation into the future." Five days later, he warned Rakovskii that there may be a situation where "we will have to separate ourselves pro forma from Red Ukraine and Red Ukrainian troops, and if necessary announce that our troops are not present there." A few days later still, in order to prevent Piłsudski and Petliura "from acquiring the sympathy of [Poland's] own masses as well as those of Western Europe" for their cause in Ukraine, Chicherin urged that "Soviet Ukraine come forth diplomatically." The difficulty lay in the absence of any Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Khar'kov, "understood by every foreign politician as proof of lack of sovereignty on the part of Soviet Ukraine." To help the situation, Moscow decided that Rakovskii should simply assume the title of Commissar of Foreign Affairs, employing no diplomatic apparatus but instead sending drafts of his notes to Chicherin for editing and transmission by radio. Rakovskii also devised a plan to use the Borotbists, before discarding them, "to demonstrate together with them before foreign countries" that Soviet Ukraine was a sovereign republic.[113]

Indeed, at this point, the Bolsheviks made a strong effort to portray themselves as willing to share power in Ukraine. In its 19 February 1920 radio appeal to "all nations," Khar'kov stressed that the "new government" included not only the Bolsheviks but also members of several other radical left parties, such as the Borotbists.[114] Naturally, the appeal did not mention that according to the Politburo's specific instructions,[115] all non-Bolshevik members of the government together constituted a minority of no real significance.

The Polish Spring Offensive against Kiev

Having improved the strategic situation of Polish troops in the Northwestland thanks to the Polish-Latvian offensive in Latgalia, Piłsudski turned his attention to the Southwestland. In late January 1920, he told General Śmigły-Rydz, the able executor of his special military undertakings, that he would need him in Ukraine.

At this point, Piłsudski had to face the whole issue of war and peace with Russia, given the public peace offers just made by Moscow. He distrusted the Bolsheviks in general, and feared they were making these offers mainly to gain them the time necessary to move their troops from the Southern Front, where they were presently finishing off Denikin, to the Polish front. As early as mid-December 1919, the Polish High Command warned its troops that "after the eventual liquidation of Denikin, all the military force of Bolshevik Russia will undoubtedly turn against Poland."[116]

This notion was soon definitively confirmed by the Polish General Staff's Second Department which directed the secret services, when it reported on 1 January that the moment of the final annihilation of Denikin's forces "is approaching very quickly. At the same time . . . the Bolsheviks are turning their eyes to the Western Front, which up to now has been treated as secondary. According to Trotsky's plans (speeches, orders), after completion of the operations against Denikin and Kolchak, the Bolsheviks are to begin an action against Poland. At that point, all the burden of fighting against the Bolsheviks will fall on Poland. Intelligence received about the planned large-scale action by the Bolsheviks against Poland is fully in agreement with Trotsky's plans, and in accord with the general situation at the moment." The report of 15 January also confirmed that "the Bolsheviks want to finish [Denikin] off to direct subsequently all their might against Poland," and that they "will in the immediate future have an opportunity to transfer their forces from the Southern to the Polish front."[117] The Second Department had reported, beginning in December 1919, a constant buildup of Soviet troops in the west. Thus, reinforcements arriving between 22 December and 13 February amounted to thirty-four thousand effective infantry and cavalry.[118] The troops coming from the Southern Front were the best units in Soviet Russia, warlike and full of confidence after their resounding victory over Denikin.

Considering this situation, Piłsudski came to the conclusion that from the strategic point of view it was better to begin an offensive quickly and on his own terms than to wait for the Bolsheviks to complete their preparations for a decisive campaign. The idea was to defeat Soviet forces present at the Polish front before the expected "at least 100,000 troops"[119] could arrive from the Southern Front. To defeat them decisively, it was necessary to strike at the main concentration of forces. Until early April 1920, the Second Department believed the Bolsheviks intended to carry out their main strike in the Southwestland,[120] so Piłsudski wanted to hit them there. One could also reasonably assume that the Soviets would not give away Kiev, a symbolic city to East Slavs, without a major battle. It was vital not to let them withdraw from the Borderlands unharmed,

since neither Polish public opinion nor the Parliament would agree to chasing them beyond the pre-partition border of 1772, as Poland laid no claim to these territories. Most importantly, an offensive in the south was necessary from the political point of view, since Piłsudski had already decided to support Petliura's Directory, believing that the loss of Ukraine would cripple Russia permanently. Moreover, once an independent Ukrainian state was established, a Polish-Bolshevik front line would remain only in the Northwestland.

In preparation for the offensive in Ukraine, an army corps under General Władysław Sikorski took Mozyr' in early March 1920, thereby cutting the shortest railroad link between Soviet formations in the Southwestland and those in the Northwestland. Preparations were also made in the realm of equipment. For perhaps the first time in the war, the Polish Army's equipment was more or less on a par with that of the Red Army, thanks to recent large purchases made in France.[121] The Poles planned their offensive in Ukraine to begin in early May, the time when dirt roads in the region normally become passable.[122]

This plan was suddenly put in question by new intelligence, received in early April, that the Bolsheviks were concentrating forces for their main stroke in the areas of Vitebsk—Orsha—Borisov and Polotsk—Drissa in the Northwestland (see Map 2). The problem was that the Polish offensive in the south would thus deal with the enemy's secondary forces, while his main forces were about to strike in the north. In this unexpected situation, Piłsudski decided to attack earlier than originally planned. He wanted to complete the offensive in Ukraine as soon as possible, and counted on the ability of Polish troops in the Northwestland to withstand the Bolshevik attack until then. His calculation was based on the estimate that it would take the Soviets until July to prepare their offensive in the north.[123]

The Polish offensive in the Southwestland began on 25 April 1920. Three armies counting ten divisions (including Petliura's troops) struck at two armies numbering seven divisions. Bolshevik forces of the Southwestern Front were hit hard and immediately began to withdraw. Polish cavalry units made three raids deep into Bolshevik positions, trying to block the withdrawing enemy. However, only a raid on Kazatin, carried out by a cavalry division under General Jan Romer, led to a significant victory. In each of the other two raids, a cavalry brigade proved to be too small a unit to hold its positions against withdrawing Bolshevik forces. Nonetheless, the first phase of the offensive was overall quite successful, as Polish troops raced forward, covering up to forty kilometers a day. They were aided by the voluntary surrender of two East Galician brigades, which rebelled against the Red Army, and by local inhabitants, who often formed armed bands which hunted down Bolshevik soldiers.[124]

Red Army units, especially the 12th Army, were withdrawing in panic and complete chaos.[125]

At this point, however, Piłsudski decided to halt the offensive. An intercepted order suggested indirectly that the Bolsheviks intended to defend Kiev as expected.[126] Realizing that his frontal attack beginning the offensive had been too strong, as it had caused the enemy's instant withdrawal,[127] Piłsudski was now determined not to repeat the same mistake. He wanted to lull the Bolsheviks into believing that they had a chance to defend the city. At the same time, Polish troops were given time to prepare for the battle.

On 6 May, however, the commander of the Soviet 12th Army issued the order to evacuate Kiev without waiting for the Polish attack.[128] This odd turn of events was a result of Moscow's politically motivated decision to surrender it. Already on 4 May—three days before the Polish troops even began their advance on the city—the Politburo resolved to charge "the Presidium of the All-Russian Executive Committee to prepare a manifesto in case of the capture of Kiev." That such a capture was not only expected but also desired is clear from the following Politburo instruction: "Immediately after receipt of news of the capture of Kiev, inform all Province and County Executive Committees by radio and require them to stop work in all factories, institutions, etc., for half an hour, and hold emergency meetings devoted to the Polish invasion." Not to forget the peasants, all the Province and County Executive Committees were also ordered to reprint the manifesto and to distribute it in each and every little village. It was further explained that "all agitation in general ought to be based on the fact of Soviet loss of territory, and Soviet power ought to be presented as the defending side."[129] The loss of Kiev was thus purposely designed by the Soviets as a clever means of mobilizing the Russian population to redouble their war effort.

When Polish troops renewed the offensive on 7 May, the Bolsheviks had already withdrawn, surrendering Kiev without a fight. Thus, the second phase of the offensive, designed to destroy enemy forces, did not achieve its main objective.[130] Nonetheless, the reaction at home exceeded all expectations. Everyone, except the staunchest National Democrats, was euphoric at the capture of Kiev. Piłsudski had reached the climax of his popularity and authority. Even the speaker of Parliament, Wojciech Trąmpczyński, normally rather unsympathetic toward him, joined prominently in the celebrations in Warsaw.

Having captured Kiev, Polish troops in Ukraine switched into a defensive mode. This was done for both political and military reasons. Since the city lay eight kilometers east of the pre-partition border of 1772, Piłsudski feared that its capture might cause protests from the opposition. In fact, initially even Premier

Skulski had objections, although he let himself be persuaded that it was necessary strategically and politically.[131] Sending troops beyond the Southwestland would certainly cause a storm at home.[132] Most importantly, expecting a Bolshevik attack in the Northwestland, the Poles could ill afford to continue the offensive in Ukraine. However, by switching to the defensive, the Polish Army gave away the initiative, which the Red Army was quick to seize.

The official Soviet peace offers were abortive, as they did not even lead to negotiations. The offer of 22 December 1919 was clearly made in bad faith. Coming just a few days after the fiasco of the Markhlevskii mission, it was designed mainly to hamper Polish preparations for the Polish–Latvian offensive in Latgalia. Poland, in any event, was not in a position to accept for fear of incurring the wrath of the Entente.

The offer of 28 January 1920 was also made in bad faith. A political decision had already been made "to launch an offensive war" that would lead indirectly to "the Sovietization of Poland". The military plan for a Soviet spring offensive had also been prepared. The offer was intended to distract the Polish enemy before the decisive campaign. Its objective was thus very similar to that of the first offer, although this time this was not obvious.

While the Poles, Piłsudski in particular, distrusted the Bolsheviks in general, they nonetheless decided to accept this offer. Rejecting it out of hand would have been imprudent, considering the Entente's recent change of attitude toward Soviet Russia, and given that there was pressure at home to end the war, which was severely straining Poland's resources. In addition, many Poles mistakenly thought the offer to be the result of Soviet military weakness, presenting Poland with an opportunity to garner a victor's peace without having to fight a decisive campaign.

To be on the safe side, Piłsudski continued preparations, military and political, for such a campaign. His alliance with Petliura played a crucial role in those preparations. The Bolshevik response was to make significant efforts to draw away Poland's potential allies. Soviet Russia offered substantial concessions to each of the Borderlands nations and, in particular, decided to drop plans for a merger with Soviet Ukraine, portraying it instead as a republic independent from Moscow.

In the end, no peace negotiations between Poland and Soviet Russia began at this time because while the Poles viewed themselves as victorious, the Bolsheviks considered themselves undefeated, if not outright victorious in their larger struggle against the Entente. Only a radical change in the military status quo could resolve the deadlock. The Polish offensive against Kiev was precisely

intended to create such a radical change, yet it failed to achieve its aim due to the Soviets' speedy, politically motivated retreat.

The peace offers, while abortive, were nonetheless pregnant with important consequences. The phony first offer as well as Moscow's ultimate rejection of negotiations must have confirmed Piłsudski in his distrust of the Bolsheviks and their motives. The demarcation line proposed by the second offer, and the subsequent process of working out peace terms by the Poles from a position of strength, led to exaggerated expectations on the Polish side. Finally, the Polish peace terms and Piłsudski's formal alliance with Petliura confirmed the Soviets in their determination to prevent the realization of the federalist concept.

CHAPTER IV

The Minsk Negotiations

The Limited Soviet Offensive in Belarus

It is remarkable that the Bolshevik leadership was not at all concerned that the Poles struck first by launching their offensive in the Southwestland on 25 April 1920. Indeed, four days later Lenin declared, "we regard this new adventure with the utmost calm." He emphasized at the same time that "despite all our pliancy, war [with Poland] has been foisted on us."[1] The same day, Supreme Commander Kamenev described the Polish offensive as "advantageous to us."[2] The next day, Trotsky put it even more bluntly. By taking the offensive, the Poles "fell right into a trap." It was obvious to him that "the outcome of the forthcoming struggle does not leave any room for doubt." The end result would be an allied Soviet Poland, opening a way to "the proletariat of Europe and all the world." He emphasized, however, that it was the Polish proletariat which "will transform its country into a socialist republic."[3] The same idea was put even more clearly by Mikhail I. Kalinin, the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, who said publicly on 16 May: "If we deliver the first blow to the Polish bourgeoisie, the Polish proletariat will deliver the final one."[4]

Thus, the Bolshevik offensive in Belarus, begun on 14 May, was meant strictly as a limited operation, aimed at crushing the backbone of the Polish Army without entering Poland proper.[5] Indeed, Bolshevik forces, attacking from the area of Vitebsk-Orsha, intended to break the front in its northern part and then swoop down to the south, taking Minsk and pushing Polish troops into the Polesie Marshes, to be annihilated there. Hence, the operation's objectives did not include invasion of Poland proper. The Bolshevik Western

Front, commanded since 29 April by Tukhachevskii, consisted of twenty-one divisions, some of which were late in arriving, divided between two oversized armies.[6] The Poles could initially deploy against them two regular-size armies. The Bolsheviks managed to break the front quickly; however, their maneuver to the south was stopped after heavy fighting. On 1 June, Polish troops, commanded personally by Piłsudski and reinforced by a reserve army, launched a counterattack.[7] After some intense fighting, the Bolsheviks were forced to withdraw with heavy losses, although they managed to retain the small but strategically important territory between Polotsk and Lepel' (see Map 3). By 10 June, the Bolshevik offensive in the Northwestland, also known as the Battle of the Berezina, was over. While the Poles managed to repel the attack, they did so only with the greatest difficulty, and their confidence began to wane.

Poland, Autonomous Belarus, and Allied Ukraine

Although in March 1920 the Belarusians had grudgingly accepted that Warsaw, while supporting Belarusian education and culture in the Minsk region, would not hear any Belarusian political demands, they nonetheless continued to make such demands.[8] In May, the Supreme Rada proposed a federation whereby Poland and Belarus would have a common parliament, but separate governments, armies, laws, and treasuries. In June, it demanded that Poland recognize the independence of the Belarusian People's Republic, and turn it over to the League of Nations as a protectorate until a Belarusian Constituent Assembly was convened.[9] Poland did not even bother to respond, considering creation of an independent Belarusian state to be impossible because of both the low level of Belarusian national consciousness among the population, and the opposition of the Entente. Federation, on the other hand, made sense to the Poles only *en trois*, together with Lithuania.[10] Only in this case might the Polish population of the regions of Wilno and Grodno reconsider its firmly incorporationist stand. Given Lithuanian aversion to the scheme, however, this was unlikely. Consequently, all that Poland would offer to Belarus in the spring of 1920 was autonomy in the Minsk region.[11]

In the Southwestland, implementation of the Polish-Ukrainian agreements of 21–24 April began promisingly, with upbeat proclamations by both leaders, issued in the wake of the offensive against Kiev. Piłsudski assured the local population that "the Polish troops will remain in Ukraine only as long as necessary to transfer authority over the country to the legitimate Ukrainian government."[12] In another public statement, considering that the alliance might never have materialized if not for the perseverance of the two leaders,

he expressed hope that in the long term, "representatives of the Polish and the [future] Ukrainian Parliament will establish a common plane of understanding."[13] Polish short-term goals in Ukraine are perhaps best characterized by the High Command's order of 8 May, explaining to the soldiers: "It is in the Polish interest to withdraw our troops from the occupied territories as quickly as possible and to establish good neighborly relations with the newly created Ukrainian state, as in this way a significant part of our eastern border will be secured from the direct danger of Bolshevik troops. The Polish occupation of Ukraine must be calculated not in years, but in months. The sooner regular Ukrainian troops are formed, and the sooner they go to the front to liberate further the land of Ukraine from the Bolshevik yoke, the better the situation will be for the Polish State. The fewer the frictions and clashes with the Ukrainian authorities during the joint work, the more easily will Poland's ultimate aim be attained."[14]

Nonetheless, frictions were not avoided.[15] These included cases of unauthorized Polish appropriation of the spoils of war, high-handed Polish treatment of Ukrainians, and excessive requisitions by some Polish troops faced with the Ukrainian government's inability to supply them with foodstuffs.[16] Moreover, the Ukrainian army did not get as much Polish arms and equipment as it had hoped.[17] At the same time, the Poles were blamed for the delay in replacement of Polish by Ukrainian administration in the area between the agreed-upon Polish-Ukrainian border and the front line as of 25 April 1920. This delay prevented the Ukrainians from carrying out conscription there until it was too late.[18] The Polish military, in any case, did not support conscription in Ukraine, since they saw Petliura's troops as "demoralized and unsuitable for a regular army." To carry out conscription without a fundamental overhaul of these troops would only compound the problem.[19] In addition, it appears that many Polish local commanders were skeptical about their newfound Ukrainian allies, and wary of what they saw as the High Command's "rather academic tendencies for absolute Polish-Ukrainian friendship."[20]

There is no doubt, however, of the consistent effort on the part of Piłsudski, the Polish government, and the High Command to lend comprehensive support to Petliura's Ukraine, and to avoid friction.[21] For instance, in a move important from the symbolic and psychological points of view, Petliura's troops joined Polish soldiers in the parade on the streets of Kiev. On the more practical side, the Polish envoy in Bucharest received instructions from Warsaw to induce Romania to recognize Petliura's government, and to supply the Ukrainians with war materiel, especially "Russian ammunition which we do not have and which is urgently needed." The High Command reminded its troops that Polish goals

in Ukraine included "the establishment of the Ukrainian army and statehood in the most expeditious and efficient manner," as well as "sparing the local population from the violence and excesses usually associated with military operations." It was not the task of Polish soldiers "either to disarm by force the Ukrainian population or to reclaim the rights of Polish landowners." On a positive note, the High Command observed that the Ukrainian population was getting more friendly toward Polish troops.[22]

It is possible that given more time, Polish-Ukrainian frictions would have tapered off, and some semblance of Ukrainian army and statehood would have been established.[23] Much, if not all, hinged on the outcome of the campaign.[24] However, the successful Bolshevik counteroffensive in Ukraine, begun in late May 1920, pushed Polish and Petliura's troops out of Dnieper Ukraine and deep into East Galicia. Thus, the battle for an independent Dnieper Ukraine seemed irretrievably lost, and the Poles began to perceive their alliance with Petliura as a liability, rather than an asset.

The Soviet Minor Offensive in Ukraine

The minor Bolshevik offensive in the Southwestland began on 26 May. Two armies, one army corps, and one cavalry army of the Southwestern Front attacked two Polish armies. It took the famous Cavalry Army until 5 June to break the Polish front (see Map 3). The Cavalry Army, consisting of Cossacks and led by Semen Budennyi, was the Red Army's elite formation, known for its great mobility, fighting ability, and savagery. Once they broke the front, Polish troops were forced to withdraw hastily from Kiev to avoid encirclement. Subsequently, Budennyi's cavalry managed for a long time to keep one step ahead of Polish troops, catching them off balance and forcing them to withdraw farther west.

The Poles were in trouble here for several reasons. First, they had no cavalry formations of comparable size. Second, Polish infantry, although overall better trained and disciplined, and more committed than their Soviet counterparts,[25] had great difficulty defending against sudden and rapid Cossack charges because of their inadequate training in musketry, and the resulting tendency to panic. The Cossacks certainly did their best to engender panic by committing numerous atrocities.[26] Piłsudski, who had initially underestimated the Cavalry Army along with the rest of the Red Army, now decided to use his last reserves in a frantic attempt to corner Budennyi before the imminent second Bolshevik offensive in Belarus.[27] This attempt, made at Równe in early July when the second Belarusian offensive was already beginning, proved ultimately unsuccessful.[28]

The Soviets and the Ukrainian Issue

To counter Polish ascendancy in Ukraine in the spring of 1920, Moscow tried to gain influence among Ukrainian émigrés in Vienna, their main center. This effort was overseen from Germany by Leonid B. Krasin, a prominent Russian Bolshevik.[29] It paid off handsomely in late May, when Volodymyr Vynnychenko, the former founding member of the Directory and one of the best-known Ukrainian leaders, decided to join the Soviet Ukrainian government. With enthusiasm, he traveled from Vienna to Moscow and then to Khar'kov, where he was officially given the posts of Rakovskii's deputy and Ukrainian commissar of foreign affairs. In practice, however, he was not allowed "to touch anything," and when he went to complain to Lenin and Trotsky, they made him wait, and then sent him back to Rakovskii. Disillusioned, Vynnychenko left the Soviet state in September 1920. It might have consoled him, however, to know that he was not the only Ukrainian activist whom Moscow mistrusted. For instance, ethnic Russian Bolsheviks were then often named to posts in Ukraine, while many ethnic Ukrainian Bolsheviks, even well known ones, were sent to work in Russia.[30] Even Rakovskii did not seem to be fully trusted, as his influence was counterbalanced by that of the head of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Grigorii I. Petrovskii. While referring to the Ukrainian government, the Politburo was careful to mention the names of both, and Petrovskii's signature on official documents preceded that of Rakovskii.[31]

The nature of the relationship between Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine continued to be rather unclear. On the one hand, the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets of December 1919 had defined it as "federative ties." On the other, the decree of 1 June 1919 on the unity of Soviet republics remained in force, meaning that all military, economic, and financial matters, as well as those related to railway transportation and labor, continued to be run from Moscow. The decree's scope was even extended in the spring of 1920 to cover the post and telegraph. The Fourth Conference of the Bolshevik Party of Ukraine, held in March 1920, revealed there was only a small and insignificant faction, made up of members from the provinces of Volhynia and Kiev, supporting a national program for Ukraine. In the following months, the faction was denounced by the Moscow leadership and its members were purged.[32] Moscow's very acceptance of a separate Ukrainian identity was put in question by the official appeal of 30 April to "all workers, peasants, and honest citizens of Russia." Signed among others by Lenin, Trotsky, and Chicherin, it alerted them to the threat posed by Poland to Ukrainian peasants, characterized as "a purely Russian population."[33] As a result of these numerous contradictions in Moscow's Ukrainian

policy, the precise interrelation between Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine was far from clear during Polish-Soviet negotiations, even to high-ranking Party and government officials.[34] As to the extent of the Ukrainian territories within the Borderlands, however, it was quite obvious to the Bolsheviks that they included the provinces of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia.

Interestingly, the adjacent region of East Galicia continued to be treated by them, for the time being, as a separate national unit, despite its ethnically Ukrainian majority population. Thus, on 22 June 1920, the Politburo decided to pursue "a cautious policy of defending the independence of East Galicia." By this it meant "the establishment of the Galician Revolutionary Committee for carrying out Soviet policy in Galicia, the organization of [anti-Polish] uprisings in the region, the concentration of [pro-Bolshevik] Galician units on the Galician front, and preparation for future unification with Ukraine."[35] Accordingly, during the Red Army advance into Poland in the summer of 1920, the Galician Revolutionary Committee was established on 9 July, playing the role of a Soviet government. It was headed by Vladimir Zatonskii, an ethnic Ukrainian and eminent Bolshevik from Soviet Ukraine. On 1 August, the committee proclaimed "full state independence of East Galicia" as a Soviet republic, remaining in "full solidarity" with Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine.[36]

The Soviet Major Offensive in Belarus

Following the failure of their first Belarusian offensive, the Bolsheviks immediately began preparing another.[37] Such an offensive was necessary to keep the initiative and give support to the successful drive of Budennyi before he ran out of steam. This time, however, it was to be a large-scale offensive that would sweep right into Poland proper. There had already been a consensus among the Bolsheviks at the Western Front, before the Polish offensive in Ukraine, that "it is necessary to go into Poland in order to introduce communism there."[38] Now the failure of the first and limited offensive, the absence of any disintegration of the Polish Army in the wake of Budennyi's successes, and the apparent weakness of the revolutionary movement in Poland proper,[39] led the Bolshevik leadership to believe that the only way to bring about a revolution in Poland was to invade it.

At the same time, the Bolsheviks had to take into account the psychological momentum. From the very first days of the Polish offensive in Ukraine, they had artfully presented it as a purely imperialistic adventure, and a direct threat to the independence of Russia.[40] As a result, they were able to gain a measure of popular support among the population as the defenders of Russia, prosecuting a defensive war against its traditional enemy. At mass meetings of workers and

peasants, organized by the Bolsheviks all over Russia, specially trained agitators played upon patriotic and nationalist feelings.[41] Karl Radek, a Polish-Jewish Bolshevik in charge of this propaganda campaign, went as far as to talk about a "national war" fought by "Motherland-loving truly Russian people."[42] The Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda* published a letter written by the well-known former tsarist General Aleksei A. Brusilov vowing that "the Polish invasion of the territories belonging to the Russian Orthodox people from time immemorial must be repulsed by force of arms."[43] Quite a few former tsarist military men responded to this appeal by volunteering for the Red Army.[44]

In late April 1920, the Bolsheviks had already decided to treat their "war with Poland not as the particular task of the Western Front, but as the central task of all of worker-peasant Russia." All agencies of the government were categorically required to offer support to the Western Front in every way, especially in the spheres of "agitation, organization, and national economy."[45] Several days later, declaring "the fight against desertion" to be "presently a matter of life and death for the Western Front," Trotsky called for using the death penalty as punishment.[46] He also decided to employ at the Western Front the best commanders from all the other fronts.[47] In late May, the Politburo, in order to help the war effort by suppressing ubiquitous sabotage, had resolved "to give martial law the most decisive and relentless character." The Cheka, or secret police, was granted "the rights of revolutionary tribunals" in cases of "arson, treachery, espionage, speculation in military property, and criminal negligence while guarding military stores and other military objects." Moreover, the Politburo confirmed the decision of the Soviet of Labor and Defense on "checking all Poles living on the Soviet territory and removing all harmful ones, as well as dismissing from positions of responsibility any suspicious persons of Polish origin."[48]

Having expended so much effort to build up military and psychological momentum, the Bolshevik leadership was not at all prepared to waste it. Yet, limited and minor offensives, whether successful or not, proved insufficient to cause the disintegration of the Polish Army, and thus were ineffective as catalysts of revolution in Poland proper. In fact, patriotism and nationalism among Poles reached such a high level in June 1920 that Polish Communists became dejected in the face of the masses' "inability to conduct revolutionary undertakings and their own helplessness," accepting the idea of Bolshevik military intervention as the only way out of the impasse.[49] Waiting for a more opportune moment seemed counterproductive to the Bolsheviks, since all the patriotic fervor and military preparedness would surely dissipate. "To stir up an all-national war for the second time would be much more difficult," as Chicherin pointed

out.[50] Thus, the only viable solution appeared to be the immediate undertaking of a large-scale offensive designed not only to annihilate the Polish Army, but also to introduce communism in Poland proper on the bayonets of the Red Army. Lenin realized, of course, that the taking of Warsaw would result in the destruction of the peace of Versailles, or "the entire international system resulting from the defeat of Germany." The buffer standing between Germany and Russia would no longer be there.[51]

In his order to the forces of the Western Front, issued on the eve of the major offensive, Tukhachevskii gave the following objective: "Over the corpse of White Poland lies the road to worldwide conflagration. On our bayonets we will bring happiness and peace to the toiling masses of mankind. To the West! . . . On to Wilno, Minsk, and Warsaw! Forward!"[52] On 4 July, the four Bolshevik armies, one army corps, and one cavalry corps of the Western Front, struck at the two armies and one army corps of the so-called Lithuanian-Belarusian Front, commanded by General Szeptycki. Bolshevik forces, numbering twenty divisions, broke the front line, defended by twelve and a half divisions, in battle on the river Auta (see Map 3).[53] The spearhead of the offensive was the Cavalry Corps, led by G. D. Gai. It operated on the very right flank of the Western Front, dashing forward along the Polish-Lithuanian armistice line. To avoid encirclement, Polish troops had to beat a hasty retreat. Piłsudski, having no available reserves, since he had already sent them against Budennyi, was helpless to stop it.

The Spa Agreement

The Poles, bracing themselves for the imminent major Bolshevik offensive, had on its eve created the State Defense Council. It was headed by Piłsudski as the Chief of State, and included the premier, three members of the cabinet, ten members of Parliament representing all major parties, and three representatives of the army. The primary purpose of the council was to create a semblance of interparty unity and solidarity, as well as to temporarily eliminate "legislative Golgotha," as the deputy minister of war put it,[54] when quick decisions were needed in a situation of wartime emergency. Nonetheless, Piłsudski's power was significantly curtailed by the creation of the council, and he was no longer free to conduct his own policy, as all major decisions required its approval.

On 5 July, the day after the major Bolshevik offensive had begun, the State Defense Council gathered in Warsaw to discuss the issue of war and peace. The council recognized that "the army used to be strong but is strong no longer; it is wavering. . . . Our army . . . is letting us down." Moreover, "tsarist

rule, followed by the [German] occupation, and then the prolonged war in defense of independence, caused general weariness. The peasant and the worker demand peace." At the same time, Poland could no longer count on the support of the Entente, irked by the Polish offensive against Kiev which it viewed as a reckless imperialistic adventure. According to the Entente, Poland was playing with fire and, by refusing to come to terms with Soviet Russia, "put at risk the peace of Europe." Shipments of ammunition and other goods bound for Poland were held up. Yet, Poland was unable to conduct war without supplies from the West. While the overall situation was serious today, it could become "tragic" tomorrow.

"The only way out" seemed to be to appeal to the Entente, currently convened at a conference in the Belgian town of Spa,[55] to throw its weight behind a Polish offer of peace negotiations. It was of course understood that the Entente would not approve any Polish federalist scheme in the Borderlands. "Yet, since we fear we may not hold our Borderlands, we have no other choice," pointed out the new foreign minister, Prince Eustachy Sapieha. Considering their favorable situation at the front, it was unlikely that the Soviets would agree to negotiate. In that case, however, Poland's label as "a warmongering country" would be removed, and it could count on the Entente's far-reaching help.

Piłsudski was the only voice skeptical of the Entente's help in concluding peace. He had "no illusions as to its value." Likewise, he put no faith in the League of Nations' intervention on behalf of Poland, seeing it merely as "an appearance, nothing more than some moral influence." At the same time, making a direct peace offer to the Bolsheviks would have an adverse impact on the army. Besides, "their first condition would be withdrawal to the river Bug line," that is to the border of Congress Poland. Instead, Piłsudski saw relief in mobilizing the whole nation for a supreme war effort. Recognizing, however, that he was in the minority, the Chief of State declared that "Poland must renounce its plans in the east." This was a clear admission that the federalist concept had been finished; all that remained was to try to implement the more modest incorporationist idea.

Piłsudski furthermore urged the government to approach the Entente as soon as possible, before the situation at the front worsened. It would also make sense to install a leftist government, since this would counteract Bolshevik propaganda which portrayed Poland as a "bourgeois" state. Finally, the Chief of State pointed out that the government might find it useful if the Polish peace offer were accompanied by his resignation from office, since he was known to be "a member of the war party." This last suggestion, however, was not accepted by the council.[56]

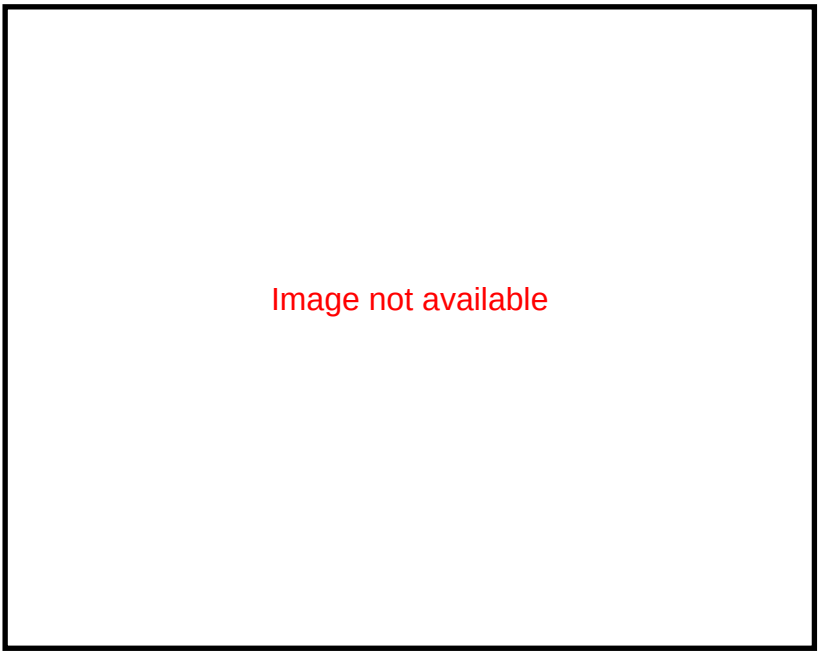

FIG. 7. Eustachy Sapieha, the Polish foreign minister. BN.

On 9–10 July, Premier Władysław Grabski was received in Spa by the representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy. He asked for help, making clear that "Poland understood it was her own fault that she was in this condition, . . . that she had to change her policy both towards her neighbors and the Allies, [and] that she had to leave the decision of her vital interests, even in the matter of her own frontiers, to the Allied Powers." The British prime minister, David Lloyd George, pointed out in reply that help could be given only if Poland abandoned "its imperialist and annexationist policy," as Polish troops had "advanced far into territories exclusively and completely Russian."[57] In the end, it was agreed that Polish troops would withdraw to the line of 8 December 1919, Soviet troops stopping fifty kilometers[58] east of this line, while in East Galicia the armistice line would be drawn along the current front line, each army withdrawing ten kilometers. Furthermore, Poland would renounce the Wilno region, and the fate of East Galicia would be decided by a peace conference under British auspices to which the Ukrainians of East Galicia would also be invited. Moreover, the Entente was to resolve all contentious issues between the Poles and Lithuanians, the Ukrainians of East Galicia, and the Czechs. Finally, Great Britain would immediately demand from the Soviets to agree to

the armistice, as outlined; if they would not agree, it would give Poland material help for the further conduct of war.[59]

The Curzon Note

The British note to the Soviets, known as the Curzon note after the name of the foreign secretary, was sent on 11 July. It differed, however, from the agreement with Premier W. Grabski in that Lord Curzon extended the line of 8 December into Galicia, drawing it east of Przemyśl and west of Rawa Ruska, thus leaving Lwów east of this new line (see Map 3).[60] The note ended rather ominously: "Should Russia, . . . not content with the withdrawal of the Polish Army from Russian territory . . . , take hostile steps on [Poland's] own territory, the Government of Great Britain and its Allies would be obliged to support the Polish nation with all means at its disposal."[61]

The Curzon note and the preceding agreement caused a strong reaction in both Warsaw and Moscow. At its session of 13 July, the State Defense Council received Premier W. Grabski's report with great dissatisfaction. His mission to Spa had been designed to save for Poland as large a part of the Borderlands as possible. Now, it turned out, nothing would be saved.[62] The council's mood was well expressed by Dmowski: "Our loss is greater than we realize. . . . This armistice means a lost peace." Only Piłsudski did not lose his spirits, emphasizing that "the war can be won, if the country wants war." His federalist plans, however, were now definitely a thing of the past. Everyone agreed with Dmowski: "Let us save what can be saved! . . . One thing—we are going to win nothing on the self-determination of nations, because these nations do not exist: neither Ukrainians nor Belarusians. Let us look after our own business only."[63]

Already since late June 1920, Chicherin had been expecting a Polish peace offer. Depending on how successful the imminent major offensive would be, he considered two possible territorial solutions. The "compromise" solution would require the Poles to "clear" the Southwestland, although the precise line of their withdrawal was yet to be worked out by Chicherin together with the Bolshevik military. In return, the Soviets would be ready to "give concessions on the Belarusian front, while not budging . . . as regards Ukraine." The other option was "more severe." The Poles would have to withdraw beyond the line of 8 December, thus practically removing themselves from the Borderlands. As Chicherin astutely observed, "diplomatically, our position would be very strong in this case because the line has been drawn by the Entente." Accordingly, the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Republic should study this line. "The necessary correction" to it would be the "annexation of East Galicia to Ukraine."

Such terms, however, would mean a "great sacrifice" on the part of the Poles, and it was a question whether they could be defeated to the point where they would be ready to accept them.[64]

The Curzon note seemed to have removed this doubt. The Bolsheviks had already been expecting "a diplomatic intervention of the Entente in our war against Poland," and had been trying to organize "an energetic [propaganda] campaign at an international scale . . . to decisively compromise the role of Great Britain, and the Entente generally, as a middleman between us and our foes."[65] Having received the British note, however, the Bolsheviks were divided in their counsels.

Trotsky advised "to accept Britain's mediation and to guarantee the inviolability of the Polish border as drawn by the Allies." The Soviets should demand, however, that the fifty-kilometer neutral zone be formed by Bolshevik troops stopping twenty-five kilometers east of the armistice line, and Polish troops withdrawing the same distance to the west of it. Chicherin was bolder, pointing out that "from Minsk to Brest-Litovsk is three hundred kilometers; the armistice gives them to us for free. We will take them; . . . once on the new line (without the fifty-kilometer [neutral] zone), we will right away present to Poland our conditions; if it does not submit, we will renew our offensive from the new line." As for the London conference, it would be conducted "in parallel with the Polish-Soviet . . . peace conference in Warsaw, where at the proper moment we will present an ultimatum." In particular, "we will demand that the arms given [to Poland] by the Entente be turned over [to us]." At the same time, however, Chicherin warned that "Sovietization of Poland by Muscovite bayonets would be an adventure. . . . We should not go too far!" Still bolder was Lev B. Kamenev, the Politburo member currently conducting negotiations in London. He argued:

> Accepting the British proposal would mean the inevitability of a new war with Poland no later than next spring. A guarantee against it can only be the Sovietization of Poland. . . . Our tactic ought to be "Wilsonian," i.e., one needs to rout Poland and make it helpless for a long time to come, understanding the armistice in the same way as the Entente had understood the armistice with Germany. We ought to reply that, of course, we are always ready for an armistice but we demand such guarantees as would not permit Poland to cheat either us or Britain . . . , i.e., the armistice can only be concluded if Poland and the Entente agree on principle to an immediate Polish demobilization, turning over artillery etc. As long as Chicherin would negotiate with Curzon on those fundamental issues, the army ought to be moving forward at any cost. . . . The fulfillment of Curzon's threats is not to be believed because Britain . . . has no soldiers to send to Poland . . . [66]

The idea that Poland should be disarmed may have been first suggested to the Soviets by some circles in Great Britain. As early as 12 July, S. Z. Rozovskii, F. A. Rotshtein, and N. K. Klyshko, the Soviet negotiators in London, wired Moscow that "in some British circles it is being said that, among conditions of peace with Poland, Soviet Russia ought to demand Poland's complete disarmament and turning over its arms, in the same way as the Entente is dealing with Germany." The negotiators argued that Soviet Russia should declare it was "ready to conduct peace negotiations only with Poland." London would find it difficult to oppose such a move because "public opinion in Great Britain is completely on our side." Besides, "Britain is unable to send even one soldier, even one artillery piece."[67]

Lenin agreed with the most radical group within the Central Committee, including Nikolai I. Bukharin and others who were "in an adventurous mood," as Chicherin put it. They not only rejected participation in the London conference but, most importantly, wanted to Sovietize Poland as the beginning of an all-out war against the Entente for Sovietization of entire Europe.[68] Chicherin had ill forebodings about this plan and warned Lenin that "by striving for immediate and complete victory we can go too far. This is playing *va banque*. Thus far, we have not tried to speed up history, but rather reconquered position after position. If we go too far, we will find ourselves threatened by a great many serious dangers." In particular, he warned Lenin not to underestimate the Entente, which "still has the ability to harm us much more than at the present moment." At the same time, Chicherin agreed that the London conference must be rejected, as it was to involve not only Soviet Russia, Poland, and Great Britain, but also Lithuania, Latvia, and Finland. There was a danger that the conference would "help to unite them against us." Instead, there should be a separate Polish-Soviet peace conference, either in Warsaw, which would be "very convenient for agitation," or in a Russian provincial city, which would be "technically more convenient." As one of the most important conditions of peace, Soviet Russia should demand reduction of the Polish Army and turning over its equipment. As for the border, he argued, the line of 8 December "not only does not leave outside Poland any localities with Polish population but, on the contrary, includes within Poland some non-Polish places." Therefore, even though the line itself would "significantly weaken Poland," it was necessary to "demand changes to it in individual areas." The border was "the main condition."[69]

It appears, however, that the Bolsheviks had a rather vague idea as to where the 8 December line and the Curzon line precisely lay.[70] For example, Markhlevskii, a Pole and the best educated among the high-ranking Bolsheviks,[71] was quite wrong in telling Lenin on 14 July that the Curzon line "cuts

off from Poland part of the Chełm region" and includes into it "only part of the Białystok region." Based on these erroneous assumptions, he suggested that it be politic to give Poles the whole of the two regions,[72] which was exactly what the Curzon line had done. This suggestion apparently found the ear of Lenin, against Chicherin's advice to the contrary, as on the next day he considered including in Soviet "tactics" the making of a "solemn declaration that we guarantee Polish workers and peasants a border east of that given by Curzon and the Entente."[73]

On 16 July, the Central Committee accepted Lenin's theses "nearly in their entirety." Soviet Russia was to "help liberate the proletariat and the toiling masses of Poland and Lithuania from their bourgeoisie and landlords." With this in view, all available means were to be used "for strengthening and speeding up the offensive." At the same time, the Bolshevik leadership decided "solemnly and officially to declare to the Polish people that we, in any event, guarantee as the border of the independent Polish republic a line more to the east than that given by Curzon and the Entente." The mediation of the Entente in negotiations with Poland was to be rejected. The Central Committee declared, however, that if Poland turned directly to Soviet Russia, "we will accept peace negotiations, not rejecting armistice negotiations, either."[74] Accordingly, Chicherin's note to Great Britain, sent the next day, reiterated and elaborated on the three latter points, while naturally remaining silent on the two former.[75]

Soviet Peace Treaties with Lithuania and Latvia

The Soviet-Lithuanian peace negotiations began in Moscow on 7 May 1920, precisely at the time that Polish troops were capturing Kiev on the Southwestern Front. On the Western Front, the Bolsheviks were just completing their preparations for a limited offensive. A Lithuanian attack on the Poles from the rear would be of great assistance. At the suggestion of the commander of the Western Front, Tukhachevskii, the Politburo decided it was "extremely necessary to draw the Lithuanian government into an operation to capture Wilno."[76] Accordingly, Ioffe, the head of the Soviet peace delegation, laid his cards on the table—if a suitable military convention were agreed upon, all territorial questions would be solved in "a couple of hours."[77] The cautious Lithuanians preferred to wait, however, until they saw "real victories of the Bolsheviks" on the battlefront.[78] The first of these followed only in June, and a draft of a Soviet-Lithuanian military convention was worked out on 24 June.[79] Not until the major Soviet offensive on the Western Front began successfully on 4 July, though, was the Lithuanian government finally ready to sign it. At this point, however, the Soviets had second thoughts. In view of

the offensive moving well beyond expectations, they were now confident of taking Wilno without any Lithuanian assistance. Since a military convention might have created a situation where the Lithuanians "enter Wilno ahead of us," as Chicherin feared, the Bolsheviks decided it was "at present no longer expedient."[80] Having received the Curzon note with a British ultimatum on 11 July, they hurriedly signed the peace treaty on the next day, with no military convention attached. Soviet Russia recognized as Lithuanian the immediate Grodno region as well as most of Wilno Province, including Święciany, Oszmiana, and Lida (see Map 4).[81] According to Soviet understanding, these were ethnically Belarusian territories.[82]

Following offers made by Lithuanian army commanders, joint military actions did take place at the local level.[83] Chicherin acknowledged this in his note of 19 July to his Lithuanian counterpart, Juozas Purickis: "We joyfully welcome the joint operations of the Lithuanian and Russian armies against the Polish imperialists."[84] Indeed, while officially declaring neutrality, Lithuania effectively assisted Bolshevik troops in the wake of the signing of the peace treaty. Lithuanian forces moved not only into the Polish-held territories ceded to them by the treaty, but also into the Congress Poland counties of Suwałki and Augustów.[85] In numerous cases, Lithuanian troops fought against or disarmed Polish units, including an infantry brigade, found in these territories. Disarmed Polish soldiers were initially treated as prisoners of war, and only later given the status of internees. Most significantly, according to a secret clause of the peace treaty, the Lithuanians let the Bolsheviks pass through their positions in the newly acquired territory, thus allowing them to surprise the Poles by going around their left flank. In addition, Lithuania lent Soviet Russia standard-gauge rolling stock, sorely needed by the Red Army to transport troops, war materiel and supplies.[86]

The Poles, surprised by the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, disavowed its territorial clauses, and attempted belatedly to minimize the damage. Thus, the State Defense Council decided that Wilno would be surrendered to the Lithuanians. Piłsudski, however, had already given the order to defend the city against the Bolsheviks and thirty thousand inhabitants had volunteered for the Polish Army. In the end, after much confusion, Polish troops evacuated the city without a fight, and the Bolsheviks entered it before the Lithuanians on 14 July.[87]

Subsequently, the Wilno Revolutionary-Military Committee was created as the highest authority in the city, including Bolsheviks of Lithuanian and local Polish origin who had been the leaders of former Soviet Lithuania. The city became a center of propaganda calling for a Bolshevik revolution in Lithuania.[88] In contravention of the peace treaty, Soviet power was being established in the

territories previously held by the Poles and ceded by the treaty to Lithuania.[89] This was consistent with Moscow's firm conviction that the treaty would "be in existence for a few weeks in all," and that "with our further advance to the west, White Lithuania cannot be preserved under any circumstances. It is therefore necessary to prepare for [re]establishing Soviet Lithuania."[90]

In parallel with their peace negotiations with Lithuania, the Soviets conducted peace negotiations with Latvia. Their overriding aim was to ensure Latvian neutrality in the Soviet-Polish conflict, as this would free two divisions to be used in the decisive offensive against Poland.[91] The Bolsheviks scored a significant success when, on 19 May, the Latvians signed a secret declaration "not to give any assistance to Poland in its present war with Russia."[92] In practice, however, Latvia adopted benevolent neutrality toward Poland, perceiving that in case of a Polish defeat its own existence would be threatened.[93] It is noteworthy that as late as early August, when the Soviets believed the Poles to be practically defeated, Chicherin still viewed a peace treaty with Latvia primarily in terms of securing "full tranquility on the Latvian Front."[94] This would suggest that Moscow expected major military operations *after* the fall of Poland. In any case, having received Lloyd George's "three-day ultimatum" on 4 August, demanding that the Red Army stop its advance on Warsaw, the Soviets decided to conclude the negotiations.[95] In the peace treaty, signed in Riga on 11 August 1920, Soviet Russia officially recognized Latgalia as part of an independent Latvia.

The Reestablishment of Soviet Belarus

Another Soviet project in the Northwestland was to resurrect hapless Soviet Belarus. On 14 July, Ivor T. Smilga, the commissar of the Western Front, officially recommended that a Belarusian Soviet Republic be proclaimed. This was to be done "for the time being *in abstracto*,"[96] as the Bolsheviks did not want to be specific, so as to keep their options open in view of their future settlement with Poland. This recommendation was accepted by Moscow, to be implemented on the basis of the "theses" prepared by a special committee of the Bolshevik Party of Lithuania and Belarus. They stated that the Belarusians were not a separate nation and neither their language nor culture were different from those of Russia. The Belarusian national movement was declared to have no support among the working masses. However, while ethnic, economic, and cultural conditions did not warrant a Soviet Belarusian Republic, such a creation was deemed necessary because of its existence in the past.[97] This was apparently the first-ever instance of Soviet recognition of the historical principle. Given that the precedent dated back merely

to January 1919, one suspects that the real motive was to apply pressure on both Lithuania and Poland.

This view is supported by the fact that already on the eve of the limited Bolshevik offensive of May 1920 the Politburo had decided to "begin negotiations" with "the so-called Belarusian government of Lastouski." This government was supported by Lithuania and resided in Kaunas. It was mainly anti-Polish but also anti-Bolshevik and had been formed following the December 1919 split in the Belarusian national movement. It seems clear from Chicherin's correspondence that the Bolsheviks carried out these Moscow negotiations, apparently broken off by the Belarusians on 7 August, in bad faith.[98] Their only purpose must have been to apply pressure on Lithuania.

In any case, Soviet Belarusian independence was proclaimed on 31 July 1920, ostensibly by "Party and trade union organizations of Belarus." The new republic was to be built on the double principle "of merciless dictatorship of the proletariat and utilization of all the experience of Soviet Russia." It had no official government, being ruled instead by the Revolutionary-Military Committee. Four languages, "Belarusian, Russian, Polish, and Yiddish," were to be used in the republic for official purposes. Significantly, the proclamation of independence declared that Soviet Belarus "delineates its western boundary along the ethnographic border between Belarus and the adjoining bourgeois states."[99] This formulation contradicted especially the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, since it was well known that the Bolsheviks viewed the regions of Grodno and Wilno as ethnically Belarusian. It was probably meant as an additional incentive for Lithuanians to Sovietize their country, since a Soviet Lithuania might be treated differently.[100] The declaration was also difficult to reconcile with Lenin's offer made to Poland of slightly better territorial terms than the Curzon line. Curiously, the boundaries between Soviet Belarus and both Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine remained undefined.

Soviet Military Successes and Strategic Errors

The Bolshevik offensive continued with dazzling speed. On 19 July, the Bolsheviks took Grodno, proceeding to cross the Curzon line. Nine days later they captured Białystok, and still four days later, Brest-Litovsk. Now, the forward units of the Western Front left the Borderlands, entering Congress Poland. In the absence of a prepared plan of defense,[101] Polish units were unable to disengage themselves from Bolshevik formations chasing them. Having been on the constant offensive since the beginning of the war, Polish generals had no experience of defense, except that gained during the Great War, when cordon-like defensive lines were used. Such

defensive lines, however, were singularly ineffective against Tukhachevskii, who skillfully broke them by concentrating "large forces in the decisive sector, leaving only a minimum of troops in the secondary areas," and then prevented the enemy from recovering by following up with an immediate, rapid, and uninterrupted pursuit.[102]

To save the situation, Piłsudski made several new senior military appointments, promoting "people having the ability to take great risks, and thus having faith and trust in the possibility of victory."[103] Most significantly, General Tadeusz Rozwadowski was appointed as chief of the General Staff. He immediately prepared an operation known as "the Battle of the [rivers] Bug and Narew," fought in the first days of August. Here, the Poles succeeded in stopping the advance of the Bolshevik troops for several days. This battle made Tukhachevskii think that the main Polish forces were north of Warsaw, and he sent most of his troops there.[104]

This direction was also chosen for political reasons, since close contact of Soviet Russia with Germany was expected to open new perspectives for world revolution.[105] As Lenin put it, "the approach of our troops to the border of eastern Prussia . . . showed that all Germany was seething. News began to come out that tens and hundreds of thousands of German Communists were crossing our borders and telegrams flew [from] German Communist regiments." He believed that not only the Communists but also German military circles were eager to enter an alliance with Soviet Russia against France.[106] Accordingly, Bolshevik troops, including commissars and officers, assured the German border authorities that having defeated Poland, Soviet Russia would restore the German border of 1914 in the east, do away with the Versailles treaty, and embark on a joint Soviet-German military campaign against France.[107]

However, the foray of the Western Front to the northwest made its southern flank vulnerable, especially since the impenetrable Polesie Marshes separated the two Soviet fronts. Tukhachevskii, prompted by Supreme Commander Kamenev,[108] finally saw the problem, and tried to solve it by having Budennyi's Cavalry Army and the 12th Army of the Southwestern Front march northwest toward Warsaw to close ranks with his weak left flank. The Central Committee threw its support behind him on 3 August, ordering the transfer of the two armies to his command.[109] To make the two armies take part in the Warsaw operation, however, was difficult for several reasons.

The Southwestern Front had three main tasks: fighting the Poles in the Southwestland and East Galicia; keeping in check White General Wrangel's troops in the Crimea; and watching over Romania, of whose intentions the Bolsheviks were suspicious. Its forces, stretched over a very large territory, were

barely adequate to achieve all these goals. Specifically, in the Southwestland and East Galicia, three Bolshevik armies were operating against Polish forces of about equal strength. That they were able to move steadily forward was thanks solely to the Cavalry Army, which broke the Polish front again near Dubno on 15 July. The fighting which followed, while successful overall, was difficult for Budennyi. The Poles, who for a long time had endeavored to entrap and encircle him behind their lines, finally succeeded at Brody in the first days of August (see Map 3). The situation was critical for the Cossacks.[110] On 6 August, however, the Cavalry Army managed to break out when Piłsudski ordered his best divisions in East Galicia to disengage and move northwest to join in the defense of Warsaw. Worn out and shaken by the difficult battle, Budennyi's troops had to take a week of rest but they were now within ninety kilometers of Lwów, and their taking of the city seemed to be only a matter of days.[111] Its capture would be a fitting reward for the Cossacks who had been enduring heavy fighting for several weeks, quite unlike the Western Front during its offensive.

It was precisely because the offensive in Belarus moved forward so easily that the original strategic plan for the Southwestern Front had been changed on 23 July. Instead of closing ranks with the southern flank of the Western Front while moving westward into Congress Poland, Budennyi was then ordered to turn to the southwest and march on Lwów.[112] This new disposition was taken mainly for political reasons. On the one hand, Trotsky feared that Romania might get involved in the war, now that the forces of the Western Front had crossed the Curzon line in spite of the British ultimatum.[113] By turning its main forces toward East Galicia, which adjoined Romania, the Southwestern Front would still be contributing to "the final rout of the Polish Army," while at the same time discouraging Bucharest from intervening.[114] On the other hand, Lev Kamenev, conducting at the time negotiations in London, pointed out to Lenin in the wake of the Curzon note of 11 July that it was "particularly important, in view of Curzon's unexpected mentioning of East Galicia including Lwów, that our troops without fail enter Galicia and capture Lwów. The fulfillment of Curzon's threats is not to be believed because Britain . . . has no soldiers to send to Poland. . . . To the capturing of Galicia, which Curzon in advance has declared to be Russian territory, one must turn particular attention; . . . this is a gateway to Hungary, which precisely at this time is important to keep in our hands."[115] Kamenev's idea gained the ear of Lenin who, buoyed by the breathtaking successes in Belarus, wired Stalin, the commissar of the Southwestern Front and a Politburo member, on 23 July: "The situation in the Comintern is splendid. Zinoviev, Bukharin, and I, too, think that revolution in Italy should be spurred on immediately. . . . To this end, Hungary should be Sovietized, and perhaps also

Czechia and Romania."[116] Stalin fully agreed with this suggestion.[117] It is thus clear that Lenin and most of his lieutenants wanted the Southwestern Front to take East Galicia as a basis for subsequent invasions of these countries.[118]

Considering also that until at least 15 August the Bolsheviks were completely confident of the Western Front's taking Warsaw in any event,[119] the decision to send two armies of the Southwestern Front against the city, and thus to stop the advance into Galicia, could only be interpreted by these armies as a monumental error. Preventing the Cavalry Army from taking Lwów seemed especially injurious. Bolshevik troops in East Galicia would then certainly lose the initiative and be forced to switch to the defensive. At the same time, given that Budennyi's army had to rest until 14 August, and that the projected capture of Warsaw by the Western Front was scheduled for 16 August, it was obvious that his cavalry would be too late to help Tukhachevskii. Therefore, it was not only Stalin but also the commander of the Southwestern Front, Aleksandr I. Egorov, as well as Budennyi himself, who vehemently opposed the decision. A direct communication link between the Western Front command and the Cavalry Army was not established until as late as 14 August. Then, when Tukhachevskii's order to move on Warsaw finally arrived, it lacked the requisite countersignature of the front commissar, which was enough for Budennyi to disregard it. At long last, having received a properly signed order, the Cavalry Army reluctantly left the outskirts of Lwów on 20 August.[120] By then, the crucial Battle of Warsaw had already been decided.

Soviet Diplomatic Delays and Peace Proposals

The Polish government received the text of Chicherin's reply to Curzon's note from the British minister in Warsaw on 20 July, with the advice to enter into direct negotiations. Two days later, Sapieha, the Polish foreign minister, sent a note to Chicherin with an offer of "an immediate armistice and opening of peace negotiations." On the same day, the chief of the Polish General Staff, General Rozwadowski, sent a note to the Supreme Command of the Red Army with an offer of "an immediate cessation of hostilities at the entire front and sending of military representatives to fix an armistice." He would wait for a reply until 25 July. The Poles acted with alacrity because every day was making their military situation more difficult, while an armistice would halt the Bolshevik offensive and allow them to reorganize their troops.[121]

For precisely the same reason, Chicherin did his best to delay.[122] On 23 July, he wrote in the name of Military Commissar Vasil'ev that the Supreme Command had received the order of the Soviet government to enter into negotiations

with its Polish counterpart, and that the Western Front command would determine the day and place of the meeting.[123] The next day, he wrote in the name of Tukhachevskii that due to the Belarusian population's "hostile attitude to representatives of the Polish government," a Polish delegation could not be met earlier than 30 July, "i.e., the day indicated in the radiotelegram of the Polish Chief of Staff."[124] Obviously, the Polish note indicated 25 July, but thanks to Chicherin's scheme the meeting was put off by five extra days, a delay for which the Soviet government ostensibly could not be blamed.

The Soviet reference to 30 July puzzled the Poles, but having no choice they decided to send a delegation on that date. The government and the State Defense Council agreed that the delegation, consisting of representatives of the government and the army, would be headed by Deputy Minister Władysław Wróblewski.[125] Its goal was to get the armistice line as indicated in the Curzon note. Considering, however, that Soviet troops had already crossed the Curzon line between Grodno and Brest-Litovsk, it would be possible to accept the actual front line as the armistice line in this area. The delegation was to reject an armistice line to the west of the actual front line, any demand for Poland's disarmament, and any attempt to meddle into the country's internal affairs. In any event, armistice negotiations must not "prejudice questions belonging to peace negotiations."[126]

At this point, the Poles also had to come to grips with the issue of Petliura. In the aftermath of the Spa agreement between Premier W. Grabski and the Entente, the government had decided to support "the issue of a Kiev Constituent Assembly" at the proposed London peace conference. As the Poles had already dropped their federalist program, however, this support would be rather moderate and offered not on principle but in view of Poland's moral obligation to Petliura's troops, who had fought "loyally and bravely."[127] Now, however, the new Government of National Unity, headed by Wincenty Witos, instructed the delegation that a Soviet demand to disarm Petliura's troops "could be accepted on condition of time [*pod warunkiem czasu*]."[128] This odd phrase probably meant that a significant amount of time was to be left for the disarming. Since the entire armistice was meant by the Poles to be a temporary device, it is possible that the government intended this formulation as a harmless ruse, since the Soviet demand would never be implemented.

In any case, the Polish armistice delegation crossed the front line just east of Brest-Litovsk on 30 July. It was late by an hour, slowed by having to negotiate a burning bridge. The Bolshevik representatives had already left. The Poles were finally able to chase them down in Baranowicze. When the delegations met on 1 August, it turned out that the Soviets had authorization from

both Lenin and Rakovskii to sign an armistice only together with a preliminary peace agreement. One reason why they wanted to conduct simultaneous armistice and peace negotiations was that the latter, as Chicherin put it on another occasion, "could be delayed and delayed, while you cannot do that with armistice negotiations."[129] With their troops advancing extraordinarily quickly, the Soviets were obviously interested in delaying. They intended the meeting in Baranowicze to have a "preparatory character," meaning that the Soviet delegation, consisting exclusively of military men, was merely to ask "the Poles what they wanted" and to tell them that armistice and peace negotiations would begin four days later in another place.[130] This delaying tactic worked even better than expected, as it turned out that the Polish delegation had no authorization to deal with the issue of peace. The surprised Poles wanted to get in touch with Warsaw but, having lost their radio equipment at the burning bridge, they were forced to ask their hosts to radio their message, and the Soviets would not do so without making changes. In this situation, the Polish delegation decided on the next day to go back to Warsaw.[131]

While the Bolsheviks were trying to delay, they had already been working out their "preliminary conditions of peace." Their first outline, drawn up by the special "Commission for Working out in Detail Negotiations with Poland," was sent to the Politburo on 25 July. It stipulated, among other things, the demobilization of nearly the entire Polish Army; the arming of the organized industrial workers in Poland;[132] the turning over of arms and ammunition by Poland; the taking of Polish military officers as hostages; and free Soviet transport through Poland of people and goods in sealed railroad cars. The armistice line was to be drawn along the front line, wherever it reached west of the Curzon line; otherwise, it was to run along the Curzon line. The Polish-Soviet border was to follow the Curzon line "with divergences to the east in the Chełm region and near Białystok."[133]

Two days later, Karl Danishevskii, the Latvian Bolshevik and commissar of the Field Staff, was appointed by the Politburo as head of the Soviet peace delegation.[134] Having no experience in diplomacy, he obviously could not be expected to engage in any real negotiations; rather, his job was to present the Poles with an ultimatum, as Chicherin had earlier suggested. In an effort to determine the precise terms of the ultimatum, a detailed draft of a preliminary peace agreement was worked out by the end of July by the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Republic, headed by Trotsky. According to the draft, "Poland's eastern border" was to run from the East Prussian border near Szczuczyn along the rivers Wissa, Biebrza, Narew, and Narewka to Białowieża, and then along the rivers Leśna and Bug. South of Brest-Litovsk, the border was to diverge

from the Bug slightly to the east and then return to the Bug near Uściług. From there, it was to run along the Bug to Kryłów, then in a straight line to Medyka, just east of Przemyśl, then along the river San to Dynów, west of Przemyśl, and from there along the rivers San and Osława to the Czechoslovakian border (see Map 4). The proposed border would give the Soviet state fairly large territories west of the Curzon line, such as Białystok and Sokółka counties, and the area between Przemyśl and Sanok in Galicia. Moreover, most of Szczuczyn County of Łomża Province in Poland proper would also become part of the Soviet state. Most importantly, the strategic railroad linking Grajewo on the East Prussian border with Białystok would be entirely within the Soviet state. The only divergence to the east of the Curzon line would be east of the Bug and south of Brest-Litovsk in the middle sector of the border. In the north, the border would diverge up to one hundred kilometers west of the Curzon line, in the middle up to thirty kilometers east of the line, and in the south up to forty kilometers west of it. It is difficult to see why the Soviets were willing to recognize the little piece of territory east of the Bug as Polish, since it was ethnically Ukrainian and lay east of the Curzon line. Most likely, they wanted to be in a position to claim that they had made good on their "solemn and official" promise to offer "the Polish people" a border east of that line.

The other proposed terms of peace had much to do with interfering in Poland's internal affairs. For example, within a month, the Polish Army was to be reduced to 50,000 rank and file, and 10,000 officer and administrative cadres. Also within a month, all surplus arms and ammunition were to be turned over to the Soviets[135] who would use them to arm organized Polish "urban and industrial workers." Poland was to cease the manufacturing of arms and ammunition. It would also be obliged not to receive any foreign military assistance. In addition, as war damages, Poland was to turn over to Soviet Russia 500 locomotives and 10,000 railroad cars within a week, as well as 30,000 horses and 30,000 carriages within three weeks. "Various materials, machines, and equipment" were also to be turned over.

As stated in the preliminary draft, the armistice line was to run along the Curzon line or the front line wherever it reached west of the Curzon line. A 50-verst (53-kilometer) neutral zone was to be created between the two armies by the withdrawal of Polish troops. In this zone, order was to be kept by an armed worker militia. The Red Army was to keep up to 200,000 men immediately east of the neutral zone.

Other conditions from the earlier draft were expanded upon. For instance, Soviet Russia was to have the right to transport through Poland goods and people in sealed trains without customs, police, sanitary, or any other inspection

or control. Poland would be obliged to include organized industrial and agricultural workers in its commissions implementing both the armistice and the future peace treaty. Polish "diplomatic correspondence and other political materials" would be published by the Soviet Russian government. Poland would grant amnesty to those Polish citizens who had served in the Red Army or been sentenced for their struggle against the war. Finally, Poland would agree to Soviet Russia's turning the captured Polish officers into "political hostages guaranteeing with their lives the personal safety of Polish Communists."[136]

While these terms of peace were approved by the Politburo on 31 July, it is clear that Soviet diplomacy did not intend "to wreck the results" of Bolshevik military successes, as Stalin feared. After all, the Polish Revolutionary Committee, headed by Markhlevskii, had already been established by the Politburo on 23 July, and proclaimed a week later in Soviet-occupied Białystok as the temporary Soviet government of Poland. As Lenin explained to Stalin, the armistice and peace with "bourgeois" Poland would not be signed unless this was necessitated by General Wrangel's offensive.[137] This local offensive, begun on 26 July, reached its culmination a week later,[138] and the Bolshevik leader felt the need to act prudently. So did Trotsky, who argued that "in view of Wrangel's success and the disturbance in Kuban'," Moscow should "explain to Comrade Danishevskii that armistice negotiations ought to be conducted in such a spirit that in case of necessity it would be actually possible to conclude an armistice."[139]

In any event, Soviet delaying tactics and their handling of the Polish delegation's trip to Baranowicze made a very unfavorable impression not only on Warsaw, but also on London. On 4 August, Lloyd George, in a conversation with Lev Kamenev and Krasin, blamed Moscow for the Polish-Soviet negotiations not having begun. He threatened that if the Soviets did not present acceptable terms to the Poles, the British Navy would be ordered out, the blockade of Soviet Russia would be renewed, and Western arms would be delivered to Poland.[140]

Moscow, however, was not to be cowed. On 5 August, the Central Committee decided to continue the offensive until victory. The Bolshevik military leadership expected to take Warsaw on 16 August.[141] In the meantime, it was the task of Soviet diplomacy to prevent the Entente from striking. On the same day, Chicherin sent a note to Lloyd George explaining that by insisting on simultaneous armistice and peace negotiations the Soviets were just trying to ensure "that the very terms of the armistice with Poland included reasonable guarantees preventing Poland from trying to turn the armistice into a breathing spell for renewing military operations against Russia."[142] At the same time, the Moscow radio center was for two days[143] mysteriously unable to receive

Warsaw's note of 5 August, agreeing to such simultaneous negotiations if only the Soviets guaranteed the Polish delegation "unimpeded and direct communications with the Polish government." Finally, on the night of 11–12 August, an agreement was signed on the crossing of the front line on 14 August by the Polish delegation on its way to Minsk, where armistice and peace negotiations were to take place.[144]

While applying these delaying tactics, the Bolsheviks were at the same time reviewing their "preliminary terms of peace" in view of Lloyd George's threats of 4 August. That same day, they had decided informally to moderate their territorial demands in the northern sector.[145] The Politburo officially confirmed this decision on 13 August. The modified Polish-Soviet border would begin at the intersection of the new Lithuanian-Soviet border and the river Świsłocz, south of Grodno (see Map 4). Białystok, Sokółka, and Grajewo would thus remain Polish, as the border north of Brest-Litovsk was for the most part to follow the Curzon line. Since there were no changes to the proposed border south of Brest-Litovsk, it could rightly be said that the Soviets did not offer Poland better territorial terms than those suggested by Curzon. At the same time, the strategic railroad Wołkowysk—Białystok—Grajewo, connecting Soviet Russia with East Prussia, was to become an extraterritorial zone within Poland, under Russian military control.

The moderating of Soviet territorial demands was to be offset by tightening the screws with regard to other conditions. For example, the line to which Polish troops were to withdraw after signing an armistice was to be determined by the Soviet military command. An armed worker militia was to replace the police and gendarmerie in Poland. Only half of the reduced Polish Army was to be armed at all.[146] No organization claiming to be a government of any part of Soviet Russia or Soviet Ukraine was to be tolerated on Polish soil. In particular, Poland was to disarm, within ten days, the units commanded by "the Ukrainian rebel, Petliura," and immediately turn them over to Soviet Ukraine. His correspondence was also to be turned over. Finally, Poland was required to grant land to agricultural workers and peasants within six months.[147]

In the process of reviewing the terms, the Soviets considered the possibility of reducing the maximum number of the Polish Army's rank and file to 30,000. In the end, however, the Politburo agreed with Chicherin that it would be more politic to adhere to the original number of 50,000.[148] The suggestion by Danishevskii, the head of the Soviet peace delegation, that the Polish officer cadres be reduced to 4,000 was left unheeded.[149] Moscow likewise rejected the condition suggested by Nikolai Skrypnik, a member of the delegation, that in those counties of "the provinces of Grodno, Lublin, Chełm, and Galicia"

that would be recognized by the peace treaty as Polish, and which contained ethnically mixed populations, a plebiscite be organized to decide whether they should belong to Poland or the Soviet state.[150]

Lenin and Chicherin believed their "preliminary conditions of peace" to be already so tough that the Polish peace delegation would surely turn them down. There was therefore no point in introducing changes that made them still tougher, yet would be difficult to explain to the Polish people. By the same token, Stalin's suggestion that a representative of the Galician Revolutionary Committee, Mikhail Baran, be sent to the Minsk peace conference, was not heeded. Baran and the Galician issue were to be kept in reserve.[151]

The Battle of Warsaw

The Polish Army's devastating retreat from the river Berezina, east of Minsk, up to the gates of Warsaw in just six weeks, came as a shock to virtually all Poles. Piłsudski's credibility as leader of the nation suffered a very serious blow.[152] His power had already been significantly curtailed by the creation of the State Defense Council on the eve of the major Bolshevik offensive of 4 July. Now, the Entente exerted some pressure on Poland to replace him as commander in chief by French General Maxime Weygand.[153] The Allied pressure subsided, however, after General Weygand concluded that he would not be able to lead the Polish Army confidently, as it was unfamiliar to him, and decided to play the role of an advisor at the Polish General Staff.[154] Nonetheless, Piłsudski, perceiving continued Allied pressure to replace him by another Pole, offered to resign from both of his posts—twice. The State Defense Council and the new premier of the Government of National Unity, Wincenty Witos, wisely declined his offers.

Although clearly shaken by these events, Piłsudski managed to retain his clarity of thinking as a military commander. On 6 August, during the Battle of the Bug and Narew, he issued an order for his troops to regroup for a large counteroffensive, deciding "the fate of the war and the country."[155] The regrouping was made possible precisely by this battle, as it stopped the Bolshevik advance for a few days. At the same time, several crack divisions were brought from Volhynia and East Galicia, where they had been trying unsuccessfully to defeat Budennyi. According to Piłsudski's plan, two armies were to defend Warsaw; the third, under his personal command, was to strike the Bolsheviks from the south, once they had fully engaged their forces against the defenders.

It was crucial, of course, that the armies defending Warsaw hold out until the strike could penetrate the Bolshevik southern flank. The two fortified defensive lines just east of the city were rather poorly prepared;[156] to

make matters worse, one regiment panicked at Radzymin (see Map 3), where the main Bolshevik stroke fell on 14 August. The first fortified line was thus pierced, and the whole defense appeared to be cracking. On the next day, however, units led by General Lucjan Żeligowski, including the so-called Lithuanian-Belarusian Division, managed to retake Radzymin after very heavy fighting. This was the turning point of the battle, as the attacking spirit of the Bolsheviks was broken.[157] From then on, the defenders east of the city held firm until the siege was lifted.

The other defending army, north of Warsaw, held positions along the river Wkra, facing two Bolshevik armies. Its commander, General Władysław Sikorski, sharing the then common view that the Polish soldier was good offensively but poor in defense, ordered his troops to attack the stronger enemy.[158] This unusual tactic would most likely have ended in catastrophe if not for an unexpected lucky turn. On 15 August, during a raid by General Aleksander Karnicki's Cavalry Brigade behind the enemy lines, a regiment just recently formed out of volunteers had managed to destroy the Bolshevik 4th Army's radio center.[159] As a result, the army lost touch with Tukhachevskii for the next four crucial days, continuing its movement to the west toward Płock and Włocławek instead of striking at Sikorski's vulnerable left flank. Such a stroke would most likely have spelled his utter defeat.[160]

The Polish strike force, concentrated between Lublin and the river Wieprz, began its operations on 17 August. The Bolshevik southern flank was weaker than expected and the Poles did not have much trouble penetrating it. The Bolsheviks were forced to call a hasty retreat along the whole front for fear of encirclement. In the end, three armies managed to escape, as the strike force was not strong enough to hold them; nonetheless, they were severely mangled. Gai's Cavalry Corps and the 4th Army, however, having gone too far to the west, had no chance to escape; hence, most of their units crossed the East Prussian border and were interned there. Overall, the Red Army suffered what Lenin variously called a "profound," "catastrophic," "enormous," "gigantic," and "unheard-of defeat."[161] Polish troops took some 50,000 prisoners of war, while a large number of Bolshevik soldiers, variously estimated at between 50,000 and 80,000, was forced to cross the German border.[162] Although thousands of them soon managed to escape and return through friendly Lithuania back to the Red Army, there still remained in Germany over 48,000 interned Bolshevik soldiers in late September.[163] By 25 August, the Poles managed to retake the westernmost part of the Borderlands, including Brest-Litovsk, Bielsk, Białystok, and even Sokółka.

The victory naturally improved Piłsudski's position, and his resignation was no longer considered. His personal popularity and authority, however, did

not return to the level enjoyed after the capture of Kiev. Many of his political opponents alleged that the laurels for winning the Battle of Warsaw should be given to General Weygand, who supposedly masterminded the operation.[164] Others maintained they should go to General Rozwadowski, the chief of the General Staff.[165] Finally, in an overwhelmingly Catholic country, most people, including many of Piłsudski's supporters, believed that this breathtaking victory was due mainly to divine intervention, since the turning point of the battle was on the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, long considered the particular patron saint of Poland. Hence, the battle became popularly known as the Miracle on the Vistula.[166]

The Minsk Peace Conference

The Polish delegation to the Minsk peace conference consisted of six representatives of the Parliament, two of the government, and one of the army.[167] It was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Dąbski, also a member of Parliament and one of the leaders of the "Piast" Peasant Party. His peasant background may have been the reason that he was ultimately chosen to head the delegation over Wróblewski, who had led the armistice delegation to Baranowicze and could boast greater experience in diplomatic and governmental work, as well as better education.[168] The Poles often made a point of showing the Soviet claim about fighting a "bourgeois" Poland to be false. Moreover, Dąbski was a protégé of Premier Witos, both of them members of the same political party. He had been Deputy Foreign Minister since late March 1920, and was one of the signatories of the political agreement with Petliura's Ukraine of 21 April. In spite of this, being from East Galicia, and thus lacking in knowledge of Russia and the Russian language, he may not have been the best qualified candidate for the job.

The Poles had already a fairly clear idea of what terms to expect, since, on 9 August, Lev Kamenev had presented some of the major Soviet peace conditions to Great Britain.[169] They also realized that the fate of Poland, and thus any peace settlement, hinged on the result of the Battle of Warsaw, which was then just beginning. Should the Poles lose the battle, the Soviets might no longer need a peace treaty with a "bourgeois" Poland, as Soviet Poland would become a reality.[170] If the Poles were victorious, however, the Soviet terms would have to be discarded. Therefore, the Polish delegation had been instructed by the State Defense Council, at its meeting of 11 August, not to present or discuss any territorial terms, but rather to defend the basic ideas of self-determination and independence of Belarus and Ukraine.[171] In addition, the council declared that the Soviets had no right to dispose of the

Wilno and Grodno regions, and that the border issue between Poland and Lithuania could only be resolved by negotiations between the two sides, taking into account the will of the inhabitants of these territories. A Ukrainian military expert, Colonel Tkaczuk, was to be included in the delegation, but at the last minute he refused, unless he could join it as an official representative of Petliura's Ukraine.[172] His demand was not granted, however, since his official status would have been both unacceptable to the Soviets and unwelcome to the Entente, while the Poles were not in a position to dictate conditions. In fact, having dropped the federalist concept, the government and the State Defense Council agreed that the Ukrainian issue should not be the reason for breaking off negotiations, while Petliura's troops could be withdrawn from the front following an armistice, and dissolved in the wake of a peace treaty. Most importantly, the Polish delegation was to reject as completely unacceptable the Soviet demand for disarmament, as well as the other terms which interfered with Poland's independence and sovereignty.[173]

The Soviets had believed that Poland was reluctant to enter peace negotiations, and had sent its delegation to Minsk only under strong British and international pressure. They consequently expected the Polish delegation to be decidedly low-key. Since the Bolsheviks themselves merely intended to present the Poles with an "ultimatum," their own delegation included no diplomats, nor even Party officials, of any considerable standing. They were therefore rather alarmed upon learning that the Polish delegation, having crossed the front line on 14 August, included as many as two deputy ministers. The Soviets feared that the Poles would not simply reject the ultimatum, but use this opportunity to accuse them spectacularly of imperialism and aggression. Karl Radek, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and one of the leading Polish Bolsheviks, suggested to Lenin that "an experienced representative of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs be sent [to Minsk], best of all Ioffe." In the end, it was Radek himself who, having significant diplomatic experience, was included in the Soviet delegation.[174]

When the Polish delegation arrived in Minsk on 16 August, it was lodged in a manor house infested with bedbugs and other vermin. In addition, they were fed very poorly. This appears to have been a regular Soviet means of softening up foreign peace delegations.[175] The commander of the quarters, a Polish Bolshevik, was unpleasant, provocative, and severe toward his charges. The quarters were guarded by Soviet troops day and night, and the Poles had to inform the commander whenever they needed to get out. On one occasion, he forbade military experts to leave the quarters, thus preventing them from attending a negotiation session. Under various pretexts, the Polish delegation was

prevented from using its own radio equipment.[176] All these measures were taken by the Bolsheviks on the express orders of Danishevskii, the head of the Soviet delegation, and with Moscow's full knowledge and approval.[177] The commander of the quarters was also quite effective at spying, to the extent that, for example, Danishevskii knew the basic points of the Polish counterproposal a day before it was actually presented to him by Dąbski.[178]

The first difficulty at the negotiating table was that the Soviet delegation represented both Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine, while the Polish delegation had been authorized to negotiate only with the former. The Poles had assumed that Soviet Ukraine was part of Soviet Russia. Danishevskii admitted that this assumption seemed to "stand to reason." He explained, however, that this was, strictly speaking, not the case, even though "legal forms of relation" between the two Soviet republics had not been yet "fully determined." The Polish delegation wondered then how Skrypnik, a member of the Soviet delegation, could at the same time be a member of both the All-Russian and the Ukrainian Central Executive Committees. Neither Skrypnik himself nor Danishevskii was able to explain this puzzle without turning to Chicherin. In the meantime, both sides agreed to carry on with the negotiations.[179]

As early as 17 August, Chicherin realized, with his customary acumen, that the current change in the military situation must be reflected in the Soviet stand at the Minsk negotiations. He advised Lenin against proceeding with an ultimatum, since this would surely result in a rejection, forcing the Soviets to break off negotiations. Instead, he argued, "with the new situation, our goal ought to be agitational influence on the West." Moreover, having once broken off negotiations with the Poles, it would be more difficult to get them to the negotiating table in the future. The best course of action would be to draw out negotiations, while putting the blame for delay on the Polish delegation. This new tactic required as sophisticated a diplomat as Ioffe.[180]

Thus, the idea of an ultimatum was dropped, and a Soviet peace proposal was presented in merely categorical form on 19 August. There were significant changes in the conditions, as compared with the terms approved by the Politburo on 13 August. No longer called "preliminary," their number had been significantly reduced, and the remaining terms tended to be less specific, thus giving room for bargaining. For instance, the border was no longer precise, but described as "generally following" the Curzon line, with divergences to the east near Białystok and Chełm. Likewise, no specific lists, either of arms to be kept by the Polish Army or war damages to be paid, were included. Two conditions had been made more harsh. First, the Polish Army was not to exceed fifty thousand in total, including the officer and administrative cadres of up to ten

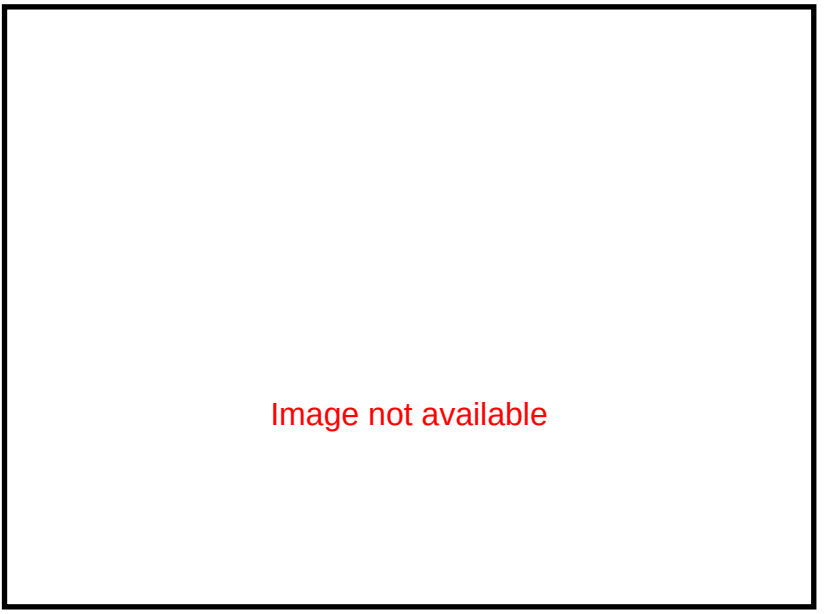

FIG. 8. Session of the peace negotiations at Minsk. Standing: Jan Dąbski, the head of the Polish delegation; sitting second to his right: Władysław Wróblewski, his deputy. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

thousand. Second, Poland was to carry out "a full political and war amnesty." Several other points had been moderated. For example, Polish troops were to withdraw fifty versts to the west of the armistice line, rather than to a line determined arbitrarily by the Soviet military command. "All [Polish] materials and documents relevant" to the Polish-Soviet war would be published by the Poles, rather than the Soviets. No specific mention was made that an armed worker militia was to replace the police and gendarmerie. Only the families of those killed or wounded in the war were clearly specified as recipients of land grants. Some demands, as well, had been dropped altogether. Thus, Poland was not obliged to reject any foreign military assistance, nor were Petliura's troops nor his correspondence to be turned over. Finally, Poland was not required to agree that the Soviets turn the captured Polish officers into hostages.[181]

The Polish counterproposal followed only on 23 August, after the Poles, despite being almost completely isolated by their Bolshevik hosts, had learned of the resounding Polish victory in the Battle of Warsaw.[182] The Polish response amounted to a categorical rejection of virtually all points in the Soviet proposal. The Poles pointed out that most of the conditions obviously contradicted Moscow's declarations of unconditional recognition of Poland's independence and

sovereignty.[183] They amounted to a victor's peace that could only be dictated to a nation that had been utterly defeated. This approach was obviously untenable in view of the recent Polish victory at the gates of Warsaw. In particular, by adopting the Curzon line, which was nearly identical with the line of the final partition, the Soviets were attempting to retain all the territory extracted from Poland by the Russian Empire during the partitions of 1772–1795. The Curzon line had no merit as an ethnic divide, since Polish ethnic territory reached "far beyond" this line.[184] Finally, Poland favored granting the right of self-determination "to the peoples inhabiting the territories between it and Russia."[185]

Faced with this categorical rejection, Danishevskii realized there was no possibility of coming to terms based on the Soviet proposal. On 25 August, he tried to impress on Chicherin that if agreement was preferred by Moscow, the whole proposal must be scrapped, taking into account the recent radical changes in the strategic situation at the front. As for the Polish delegation, he had a definite impression that its majority, including Dąbski, sincerely desired peace on the basis of "no victor and no vanquished." Most significantly, Danishevskii reported that the leftist-minded part of the Polish delegation had suggested at a "private" meeting[186] that agreement on the border in Belarus should be possible. They did not consider the Polish agreement with Petliura of 21 April 1920 to be legally binding, as it had never been ratified by Parliament. The Polish struggle for the historic border of 1772, as well as Piłsudski's romanticism, had become things of the past, and his political authority had diminished. Chicherin replied that the strategic situation of the Red Army was not so bad as to warrant a sudden withdrawal of the Soviet peace terms, which would impress "falsely" upon the whole world that "we are done for." Instead of "going to Canossa," the Soviets should: (1) delay negotiations, especially by requesting the Poles to present their positive program; and (2) pursue "the agitational aim of emphasizing our love of peace." Moreover, the Soviet delegation ought to declare that its demands were no longer categorical, but open to discussion.[187] A reluctant Danishevskii pointed out that this tactic could only buy a few days, and then the negotiations would be broken off.[188]

Chicherin, of course, realized this. The same day, he wrote Lenin that the "private" meeting with the leftist part of the Polish delegation indicated "it would be easy to obtain a 'peace agreement' with Poland." The Soviets presently had to choose between two options: either a fundamental change of policy toward Poland or termination of negotiations. In the latter case, it was essential to make sure that "the odium falls on the Poles." If, however, war were not preferable, then it would be necessary, as he put it, to enter "the path proposed by the Polish leftists."[189] This phrase, in light of Danishevskii's report, meant a

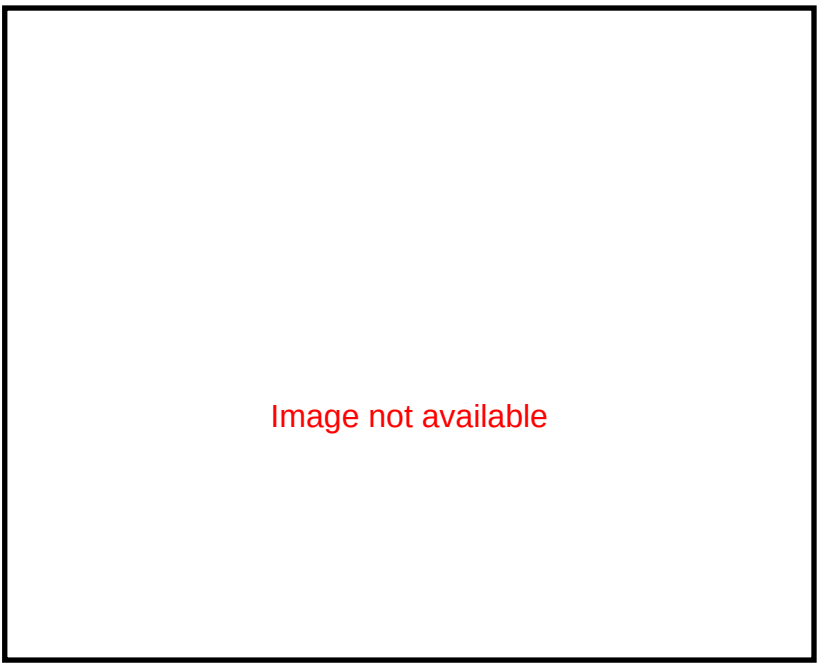

FIG. 9. Khristian Danishevskii, the head of the Soviet peace delegation at Minsk (left), and G. P. Shtykgol'd, the secretary. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

compromise territorial settlement in Belarus in exchange for Polish abandonment of federalism, and especially of Petliura.

Lenin's decision was to scrap the Soviet peace terms and to continue negotiations. Since peace could not be dictated to Poland, it was also necessary to replace Danishevskii. While his exchanges with Chicherin showed him to be able and intelligent, he was not a diplomat but a military commissar whose task had been to force the Polish delegation into submission.[190] At the outset of the new stage in negotiations, which Chicherin expected to be "undoubtedly much more difficult," there was an obvious need for a more sophisticated approach. In addition, as the chief of Soviet diplomacy pointed out, "changing of the delegation's composition . . . will be a symbolic sign of our readiness to reach a peace agreement, without obliging us in any way."[191]

The necessity of changing Minsk as the place of negotiations became likewise obvious to everyone with the issue of an order to the troops of the Western Front, signed by Tukhachevskii and written by Smilga, the front commissar, stating in part: "The Polish peace delegation in Minsk is breaking the peace in the most ignoble way. Consisting without exception of spies and members of

the counterespionage service, the Polish delegation is trying to use its location for intelligence purposes. . . . It is obvious that peace can be concluded only on the ruins of White Poland; only having dealt a complete and utter defeat to the cause of White bandits will we be able to secure for Russia peaceful work. A victoriously begun offensive ought to be victoriously ended. Shame on those who think of peace. To Warsaw! . . . The Western Front is the front of world revolution . . . Not one step back! Victory or death!"

While Danishevskii immediately complained about the order to Chicherin, pointing out that it put him "in an impossible position before the Polish delegation," the damage had already been done.[192] The Polish delegation naturally made a forceful protest to Danishevskii. Given the presence in Minsk of several foreign journalists covering the peace negotiations, the order was also a grave error from the propaganda point of view. These journalists must already have realized, in any case, that Soviet-held Minsk was not a friendly place, as they were surrounded by Cheka agents and could even be arrested.[193]

Rather than waiting for a Polish request to transfer the peace conference to a neutral country, Chicherin decided to act himself and, on 27 August, suggested to Sapieha an Estonian city as a more appropriate place for negotiations.[194] Estonia was, of course, the first state to have signed a peace treaty with Soviet Russia, and Moscow had no better relations with any other "bourgeois" country. A more devious reason had to do with the Bolsheviks' well-developed intelligence network there.[195] Apparently taking a leaf out of Chicherin's book, Sapieha proposed on the next day to transfer the peace conference to Riga as if he had never received the Soviet note. While Chicherin was drafting a second note reiterating his proposal, Sapieha was able to secure the Latvian government's agreement, of which he informed Moscow on 30 August.[196] Clearly unhappy about this, Chicherin tried to intervene with the Polish delegation at Minsk on the same day.[197] This was, naturally, to no avail, and the Soviets had no choice but to agree to Riga, since otherwise they would be blamed for petty quarreling akin to the case of Borisov. Thus, on 1 September, the Politburo decided to accept Riga as the new venue, and to send there an entirely new delegation headed by Ioffe.[198] At the closing of the Minsk negotiations on 2 September, it was agreed that "after arriving in Riga, the delegations will continue the work they have begun at Minsk."[199]

The Minsk peace negotiations resulted from a long chain of events. First, the ultimate failure of the limited Soviet offensive in Belarus showed Moscow that the only way to introduce communism into Poland was to invade the country. It also confirmed the Soviets in their conviction that it was necessary to

acquire the military cooperation of Lithuania at the price of the regions of Wilno and Grodno. The Poles, on the other hand, having repelled the limited offensive only with the greatest difficulty, began to lose confidence. Meanwhile, Piłsudski's federalist policies in Belarus and Ukraine were not particularly successful, though they did compel the Bolsheviks to counter them by continuing to portray Soviet Ukraine as a republic independent from Moscow.

The successful minor Soviet offensive in Ukraine forced Piłsudski to send all of his reserves against the cavalry of Budennyi. This left the Poles helpless to repel the imminent Soviet major offensive in Belarus. To save as much of the Borderlands as possible, they appealed to the Entente for help, even though they well understood its critical attitude toward Polish involvement in the region. The Poles realized that under the circumstances they must abandon the federalist concept, and hope that with the help of the Entente, the less ambitious incorporationist concept could still be implemented. This hope was disappointed, however, when the Entente declined to support any Polish claim to the Borderlands (except the Białystok region), or even to East Galicia.

Thus, the Curzon note of 11 July 1920, designed to stop the Soviet advance into Poland proper, and to bring the two sides to the negotiating table, satisfied neither party. The Bolsheviks wanted to continue their offensive, at least until Warsaw was captured and a Soviet Polish government installed there. This was intended to be a major milestone on the road to European revolution. At the same time, the Bolsheviks could not reject outright the idea of peace negotiations, since their propaganda portrayed a "peace-loving" Soviet Russia fighting a defensive war against a warmongering Poland. As long as the masses in the West believed this propaganda, the Entente would not be able to intervene militarily, they figured. Consequently, Moscow did its best to delay negotiations, while spurring Soviet troops to redouble their efforts.

Warsaw, on the other hand, considered the Curzon line completely unacceptable as Poland's eastern border, though it could not afford to alienate the Entente by openly rejecting it. To gain breathing space for their battered military forces, the Poles tried to speed up armistice negotiations, while at the same time delaying peace negotiations. The Soviets, of course, were shrewd enough to see through these attempts, and used their position of strength to make the Poles accept simultaneous armistice and preliminary peace negotiations at Minsk.

Had the Bolsheviks, at this point, showed self-restraint, sticking mainly to the territorial question, Poland would have had little choice but to agree to the Curzon line as its eastern border. Their goal, however, was nothing short of establishing a Soviet Poland; indeed, the Soviet Polish government was already formed and waiting to be installed in Warsaw. While the Red Army's northern

flank was secured, thanks to the peace treaties with Lithuania and Latvia, Moscow feared an Entente-inspired attack in the south by Wrangel or Romania. The Bolshevik-proposed terms of peace, such as an armed worker militia, were therefore intended to incite revolution and ensure that Poland would become a Soviet republic even in case the Soviet Polish government could not be installed because of a sudden hostile military action in the south. From the Bolshevik point of view, the Minsk negotiations were thus merely an insurance against this danger.

From the Polish point of view, those Soviet peace conditions aiming at inciting revolution and creating a Soviet Poland were, paradoxically, not inconvenient, as they ensured the Entente's continued, if limited, support for Poland. The fundamental Polish position at Minsk was the rejection of any Soviet interference in Poland's internal affairs. This had the double merit of representing the Polish nation's natural preferences, as well as being politically timely.

During the peace conference, the strategic military situation changed completely as a result of the astonishing Polish victory in the "miraculous" Battle of Warsaw. The initial Soviet reaction was to stall for time. At this juncture, the leftist part of the Polish delegation suggested at a "private" meeting that in return for a compromise territorial solution in Belarus, Poland might consider abandoning Petliura. This was a crucial moment in the Minsk negotiations. In view of the great disarray in which the Red Army found itself in the wake of the Battle of Warsaw, Lenin decided to fundamentally change Soviet policy toward Poland and "to enter the path proposed by the Polish leftists," as Chicherin put it. The subsequent complete overhaul of the Soviet delegation and moving of the peace conference to neutral Riga were direct consequences of that decision.

In retrospect, the Minsk conference could not possibly have led to a peace agreement, given the unbridgeable positions of both sides at its outset. The conference itself was mainly a result of pressure exerted by the Entente on Soviet Russia and Poland. The Polish victory in the Battle of Warsaw, however, created an entirely new situation, as both of the contending powers had now been humbled by sudden reversals of their military fortunes between June and August 1920. The Soviet tentative acceptance of the informal Polish offer of compromise in the Borderlands came as a result of this new situation. Thus, for the first time in the Polish-Soviet conflict, there had arisen a distinct possibility of compromise. The road to peace had been set.

CHAPTER V

Preliminary Peace Negotiations: Difficulties

The Battle of the Niemen

In the wake of the Battle of Warsaw, the Poles were well aware of having survived the crisis by the skin of their teeth. They would not have approved of another offensive on Kiev, but they did expect their commander in chief to consolidate the surprising victory by extending successful military operations east of the Curzon line, paving the way for an acceptable peace treaty. Piłsudski was eager to fulfill these expectations. In the south, Budennyi's cavalry was surrounded by Polish cavalry near Komarów, southeast of Zamość, on 31 August–1 September (see Map 3).[1] Budennyi managed to break out once again, but his army was so mangled that it effectively ceased to be a factor, and never regained its former strength. In both East Galicia and the Southwestland, the Poles had now firmly seized the initiative, and were quickly pushing back the Bolsheviks.

In the Northwestland, Polish troops needed time to reorganize and rest in preparation for a final offensive against the Bolsheviks, who still held Grodno and Wołkowysk. In the meantime, the Poles decided to recapture the Suwałki area, including Augustów and Sejny (see Map 4), which had been taken by Lithuanian forces in late July. They felt they had both a moral and a legal right to do this, since the area was inhabited mainly by Poles and lay on the Polish side of the line of 8 December 1919.[2] On 28 August, a Polish cavalry brigade and an infantry regiment entered the area to an enthusiastic welcome from the local population. Subsequently, however, one, and then two Lithuanian infantry divisions counterattacked, managing to recapture Sejny on 13 September.[3]

At the time, the bulk of Polish troops in the north were preparing for the offensive against the Bolshevik Western Front. This was being done hastily, because they knew Tukhachevskii was concentrating forces for an offensive of his own, aiming to strike at Białystok and Brest-Litovsk. The Polish offensive's ultimate aim was "to deal the enemy the final blow and force him to offer favorable conditions and to conclude peace quickly."[4] There were two main ideas of how to achieve this. General Rozwadowski, the chief of the General Staff, suggested that a major strike be directed at the Bolshevik Western Front's southern flank, followed by a flanking maneuver northward toward Baranowicze and Lida. Tukhachevskii's forces would, as a result, be pushed into the immediate Wilno area, which the Soviets had turned over to Lithuania on 26 August—that is, after their crushing defeat in the Battle of Warsaw.[5] Chasing the Bolsheviks, the Poles would at the same time regain the city. This plan seemed convenient politically, but was difficult logistically, because the strike force would have to pass through the marshlands of Polesie, which had few roads.[6]

Piłsudski rejected this plan, preferring to strike at the Bolshevik northern flank. On 22 September, two Polish armies, one of them oversized, struck at four Bolshevik armies, beginning an offensive known as the Battle of the Niemen. The Poles thus managed to forestall the Bolsheviks, who had intended to begin their offensive just a few days later. Their strike came as a complete surprise to Tukhachevskii who had assumed that the main Polish forces were operating in the south against Budennyi.[7] The most surprising was the maneuver of the Polish strike force, consisting of two cavalry brigades and two infantry divisions. It quickly overwhelmed the Lithuanians at Sejny, then speedily crossed the Niemen using the Lithuanian-held bridge in Druskienniki and entered Bolshevik-held territory near Lida, thus outflanking the enemy defenses at Grodno. This was a risky maneuver because the troops that had marched through Lithuanian territory had no chance of being resupplied other than upon meeting the main Polish forces at the victorious end of the whole operation. When Soviet-held Grodno fell on 26 September after heavy fighting, the strike force managed to cut off most of the withdrawing Bolshevik 3rd Army, thus ensuring the success of the offensive. The Bolsheviks retreated along the entire front. Baranowicze was captured on 30 September.[8]

The Instructions for the Polish Peace Delegation

While negotiations at Riga were conceived as a continuation of the talks at Minsk, each party had to adjust its position to take into account the strategic situation, now improving in Poland's favor. Already on 26 August 1920, in the wake of the Battle

of Warsaw, Premier Witos had officially declared that the "victory of Polish troops has in no way changed the stand of the Polish government in the matter of reaching peace." Poland was still committed to concluding "lasting, just, and honorable peace."[9] This meant the Poles would not seek a victor's peace, but rather a compromise formula. The precise meaning of this compromise, including territorial terms, was to be determined in the course of negotiations. While these negotiations would be much affected by the situation at the front, basic conditions of peace had to be worked out that could serve as practical guidelines for the peace delegation.

When the State Defense Council convened the next day, a great majority of its members were in favor of peace. Only Piłsudski warned, as usual, that "the Bolsheviks do not give any guarantees they will keep the terms of any agreement. One must take this into account and be ready for war." Leaving this warning largely unheeded, the members approved the government's proposal that the peace agreement with the Soviets should recognize as Polish the territories west of the German trenches of 1915–1917 in the Northwestland, and of the river Horyń in the Southwestland. This meant that, in the Northwestland, Polish territory would end just east of Nowogródek, Baranowicze, and Pińsk (see Map 5). As for the territory recognized as Lithuanian by the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, but actually occupied by the Soviets, it was decided that Polish troops should take it.[10] Assuming the planned Polish offensive in the Northwestland was successful, Grodno and Lida would thus become Polish as well. Moreover, the council decided by acclamation that Lithuanian troops should be removed, by force if necessary, from the Suwałki area, lying on the Polish side of the 8 December line. In the Southwestland, the border on the Horyń would give to Poland West Volhynia, including Łuck, Równe, Dubno, and Krzemieniec (see Map 2). South of the Horyń, it was decided, the border should go along the river Zbrucz, meaning that all of East Galicia would remain in Polish hands. In all these decisions, the council consciously ignored continued Allied pressure to accept the Curzon line as the Polish-Soviet border.[11]

In early September 1920, the chief of the General Staff, General Rozwadowski, prepared two reports for the State Defense Council on the issue of the Polish-Soviet border, arguing that the Curzon line was completely unsuitable as the border. Given its proximity to Warsaw and to the heart of Poland, large and costly military forces would be necessary to defend it. Considering also the absence of convenient railroads for the transfer of troops in this area, and a lack of space to halt a Bolshevik offensive before it could reach the Polish capital, at least half of the Polish Army would have to stand ready at this border. A desirable border must give the army enough space

to organize an effective defense east of Poland proper. The standing army could then be reduced, since a considerable distance between the border and the heart of Poland would allow time for mobilization of troops in case of a Bolshevik attack. Strategic considerations necessitated, therefore, that the border be drawn east of the German trenches, as this old defensive line could be adapted to become the Polish first line of defense. At the same time, the military value of this line would be seriously diminished if the railroad, running parallel to the trenches and east of them through Łuniniec and Sarny, were left in Soviet hands. Therefore, the entire railroad linking Baranowicze and Równe through Łuniniec and Sarny should be within Polish jurisdiction. This railroad would facilitate effective defense, allowing the easy transfer of troops along the border, especially through the great Polesie Marshes that divide the Northwestland from the Southwestland. The border should be drawn thirty to fifty kilometers east of the railroad. This would be the "minimal and indispensable" Polish demand from the military point of view. In addition, General Rozwadowski pointed out the desirability of acquiring the railroad from Równe through Slavuta and Proskurov to Kamenets-Podol'sk. The territory along this railroad would constitute a suitable buffer for the defense of East Galicia. Overall, a border drawn along these lines would be considered satisfactory by the army (see Map 5).[12]

That General Rozwadowski's argument was only partially accepted by the government is clear from the "political instruction" to Polish diplomats abroad, given by Sapieha on 10 September. It stated that Poland wanted its Soviet border to be drawn "more or less" along the German trench line. Moreover, owing to strategic considerations, Warsaw thought it desirable to have control of the railroad Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe. Polish possession of the Równe—Slavuta—Proskurov—Kamenets-Podol'sk railroad, however, was rejected. This moderation was mainly due to the expected Allied "doubts or opposition" toward any Polish territorial demands east of the 8 December line. The Allies, Warsaw realized, considered the territories east of this line to be rightfully Russian and, still expecting the Bolshevik regime to collapse, did not want to antagonize the White Russians. From that point of view, it was significant that Wrangel, the last remaining White Russian general, agreed to the Polish eastern border as drawn by Sapieha. Allied approval of the Polish territorial program in the east was vital for Warsaw because of the pending decisions of the Supreme Council on Danzig, Upper Silesia, and East Galicia. These issues, considered to be of prime importance to Poland, were not to be compromised by frustrating the Allies with overly ambitious eastern borders. Regardless, Warsaw was not prepared to accept Lithuanian rule over

the "Polish-inhabited" Wilno region, unless Lithuania entered into some sort of special and close "constitutional" relation with Poland.

In any event, if Polish "minimal" territorial demands could be satisfied by Soviet Russia, the further conduct of war would be "nonsense," argued Sapieha. The Polish Army, capable of a "short-term effort," was considered unable to conduct a long and difficult war. All political parties, as well as the entire population, desired peace, which was sorely needed to organize properly the newly established state and finally put it on some firm foundations. Accordingly, "Poland must conclude peace," even though there was no guarantee that it would last. Indeed, the Bolsheviks likely wanted to conclude it just to gain a free hand to finish off Wrangel, and perhaps invade Poland the following year.[13]

In the case of a compromise peace, Petliura's troops would not be disarmed by the Poles but given an opportunity to continue fighting on their own in Soviet Ukraine, east of the new Polish-Soviet border. This plan of action had been worked out together with Petliura, "who understands *qu'a l'impossible nul n'est tenu*." Warsaw, in turn, realized its obligations toward both his government and his army, and intended to be loyal. At the same time, the Poles tried to facilitate agreement between Petliura and Wrangel. Moreover, on 9 September, Sapieha conveyed to Chicherin Petliura's willingness to negotiate directly with the Soviets, at Riga. Warsaw naturally expected Moscow to reject this idea, and hoped it would put the Polish peace delegation in a position to refuse to consider any Soviet demand for disarming Petliura's troops.[14]

The final decision regarding Polish territorial demands was made by the State Defense Council on 11 September. Significantly, Piłsudski did not participate in this session, being presumably busy preparing the final offensive. As the discussion reveals, all members agreed with Sapieha that it was necessary to "find measure in demands." They pointed out that only such a border should be proposed "that could be justified." Poland "must take what is attainable and possible." Asking for too much territory was not advisable for three main reasons: (1) the Allies would accuse Poland of "imperialism"; (2) Russia, whether Red or White, would consider such a border dishonorable and would thirst for revenge; (3) inclusion of many more Ukrainians would strengthen irredentism and threaten Poland with "perennial internal strife." Accordingly, the council rejected the suggestion of the chief of the General Staff that the railroad Równe—Slavuta—Proskurov—Kamenets-Podol'sk be included in Polish territory. Instead, the council agreed upon the river Zbrucz as the Polish-Soviet border in the very south. Thus, no claim was laid to any Ukrainian territory east of Galicia. In Volhynia, the border should leave Krzemieniec and Równe on the Polish side, and then follow the General Staff line drawn thirty to fifty

kilometers east of the strategic railroad Równe—Sarny—Łuniniec—Baranowicze. The border proposed by the council, just like that of General Rozwadowski, did not extend north of the river Niemen, since these territories had been recognized as Lithuanian by the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty (see Map 5).

The instructions for the peace delegation, drawn up at the same session of the council, emphasized that this border line could only be shown to the Soviets after reaching agreement on several principles governing a border settlement. The first of these principles was that the armistice line could only be defined after the two parties agreed on the preliminary peace. Moreover, territorial settlement between Poland and Russia was to end centuries of strife between them by reconciling their vital interests. Contentious issues should be solved justly, ensuring that compact national areas were united with their main national territories, and that the will of local populations was taken into account.[15] The security of each of the two countries was also to be ensured.[16]

The peace delegation should first gain Soviet acceptance of these principles, and then continue negotiations in a mixed commission. The negotiations would be aimed at establishing both an armistice line and a border as close as possible to the line adopted by the council. To avoid giving the Soviets any pretext for breaking off negotiations due to allegedly excessive Polish territorial demands, it was advisable first to establish an armistice line based on the actual military situation, and then convert it into the border. Poland would renounce its historical rights to the territories east of that border, while Russia would recognize it as its western border and drop any claims to territories west of it. The Russians were also to acknowledge that the borders, and the nature of relations between Poland and other countries in these territories, were to be defined exclusively by the parties involved.[17] In this context, the delegation was to be careful not to recognize, directly or indirectly, the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty. Only having gained Soviet acceptance of the border desired by Poland, its "most important demand," was the delegation allowed to recognize officially Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine. To mitigate this in the eyes of Petliura, the delegation would declare that Poland acknowledged the right of the Ukrainian people to independence and free choice of regime. Furthermore, Poland would recognize cultural, language, and religious rights of Russians and Ukrainians in Poland, on the basis of reciprocity.[18]

Those were the council's instructions to the Polish peace delegation with regard to territorial settlement. These terms were moderate in comparison with the demands formulated in March 1920, although one must remember that they were drawn up before the final Polish offensive. In addition, Poland was to abandon Petliura's Ukraine in exchange for Moscow's *désintéressement*

in the fate of Lithuania and the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty. While Belarus was not expressly mentioned in the instructions, they did not at all exclude the possibility of a Polish–Lithuanian–Belarusian federation. Indeed, such a possibility was preserved, considering that the proposed border was not defined as Poland's eastern border, and in view of the proviso that borders, and the nature of relations between Poland and other countries west of this border, were to be determined solely by the parties involved.

The Peace Delegations in Riga

Equipped with these instructions, the Polish peace delegation left for Riga on 14 September, arriving there five days later. Headed by Dąbski, the delegation included nine members, just as in Minsk. Six were the same members of Parliament, representing the main political parties in Poland, who had participated in the Minsk negotiations. Particularly influential among them were Stanisław Grabski of the National Democrats, Norbert Barlicki of the Polish Socialist Party, and Władysław Kiernik of the "Piast" Peasant Party. The remaining three parliamentarians included Adam Mieczkowski of the National People's Alliance, Michał Wichliński of the Christian Democracy, and Ludwik Waszkiewicz of the National Workers' Party. Finally, Leon Wasilewski, the minister to Estonia, and Witold Kamieniecki, the chargé d'affaires at Riga, represented the government, while General Mieczysław Kuliński, the deputy chief of the General Staff, represented the Army.[19] The effective secretary general was Aleksander Ładoś. There were also forty civilian and military experts, as well as technical and office personnel.

The composition of the Polish delegation was thus highly unusual.[20] Normally, peace delegations consist only of representatives of the government and the army. Here, members of Parliament made up the majority of the delegation. Such a situation may have been amply justified at Minsk, where it was important to show that all the major political parties in Poland rejected the Soviet terms of peace, and where the Poles did not expect to engage in any real peace negotiations. Now, however, the presence of a miniature parliament within the delegation did not bode well for cohesion, especially since major decisions would have to be made.

The Polish delegation was met in Riga by the Soviet delegation, headed by Ioffe. It included only three members: Leonid L. Obolenskii, a member of the so-called Collegium of the Russian Commissariat of Finance; Dmitrii Z. Manuil'skii, the Ukrainian commissar of agriculture; and Sergei M. Kirov, the Russian diplomatic representative in Georgia. The secretary was Ivan L. Lorents.[21] Unlike Dąbski, who had to take into account the often disparate views of his members,

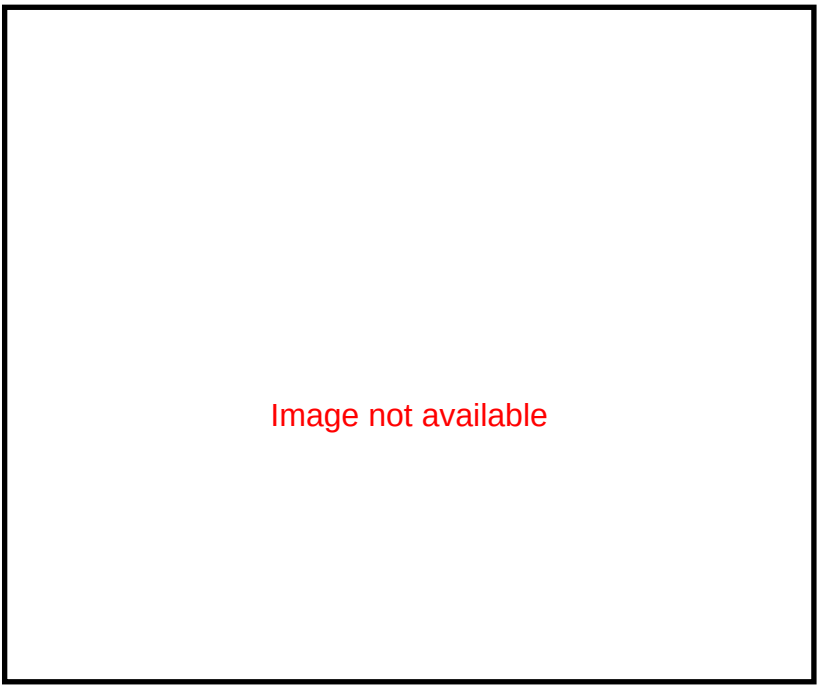

FIG. 10. The Polish delegation to the preliminary peace negotiations at Riga. Sitting from left: Władysław Kiernik, Michał Wichliński, Mieczysław Kuliński, Jan Dąbski, Stanisław Grabski, and Leon Wasilewski; standing from left: Witold Kamieniecki, Norbert Barlicki, Adam Mieczkowski, and Ludwik Waszkiewicz. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

Ioffe was in complete control of his delegation, in accordance with the official guidelines for Soviet peace delegations, established in early August.[22]

It was ironic that the delegation of "bourgeois" Poland was headed by Dąbski, the son of a peasant from East Galicia, while that of the "worker-peasant" Soviet state was led by Ioffe, a scion of the leading bourgeois family in the Crimea. This irony was accentuated by the fact that the Pole was thin, with a rather austere look, while the Bolshevik was portly and smoked luxurious Havana cigars.[23]

Dąbski had a degree in chemistry, but made his living as a journalist and politician. He was one of the best orators in Poland, and probably the most talented and energetic of the leaders of the "Piast" Peasant Party. In spite of this, he was hardly liked among fellow politicians, being very ambitious and a maverick.[24] With his somewhat brusque and dry manner, Dąbski was also unpopular among the members of his peace delegation, especially those who were

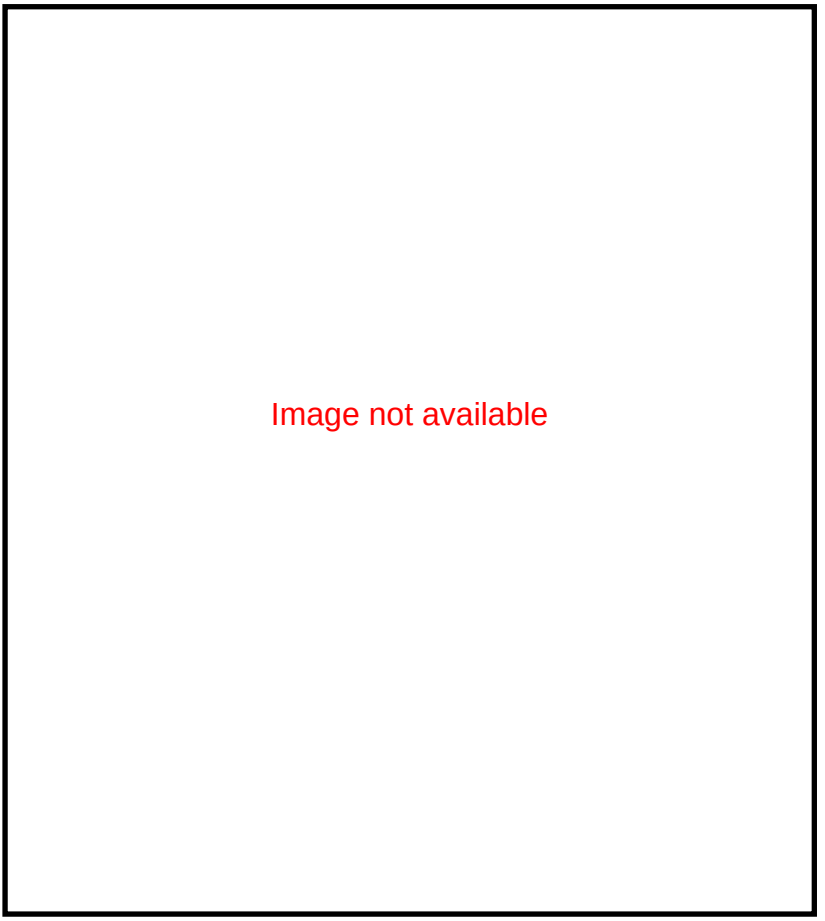

FIG. 11. Adol'f A. Ioffe, the head of the Soviet delegation at Riga. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

members of Parliament. His exalted post as head of the Polish delegation made him very proud, a feeling which he was "unable to hide."[25] He likely believed that his concluding a peace treaty with Soviet Russia would be a great boost to his political career, possibly putting him in a position to become premier.[26]

Ioffe had been educated as a physician. Like Dąbski, however, he had never really practiced his profession. Instead, he had become a professional revolutionary before the Great War, when he co-edited with Trotsky the revolutionary newspaper, *Pravda*. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Ioffe gained extensive experience as a diplomat and negotiator,[27] having been minister to Germany as well as having concluded the armistice with the Central Powers

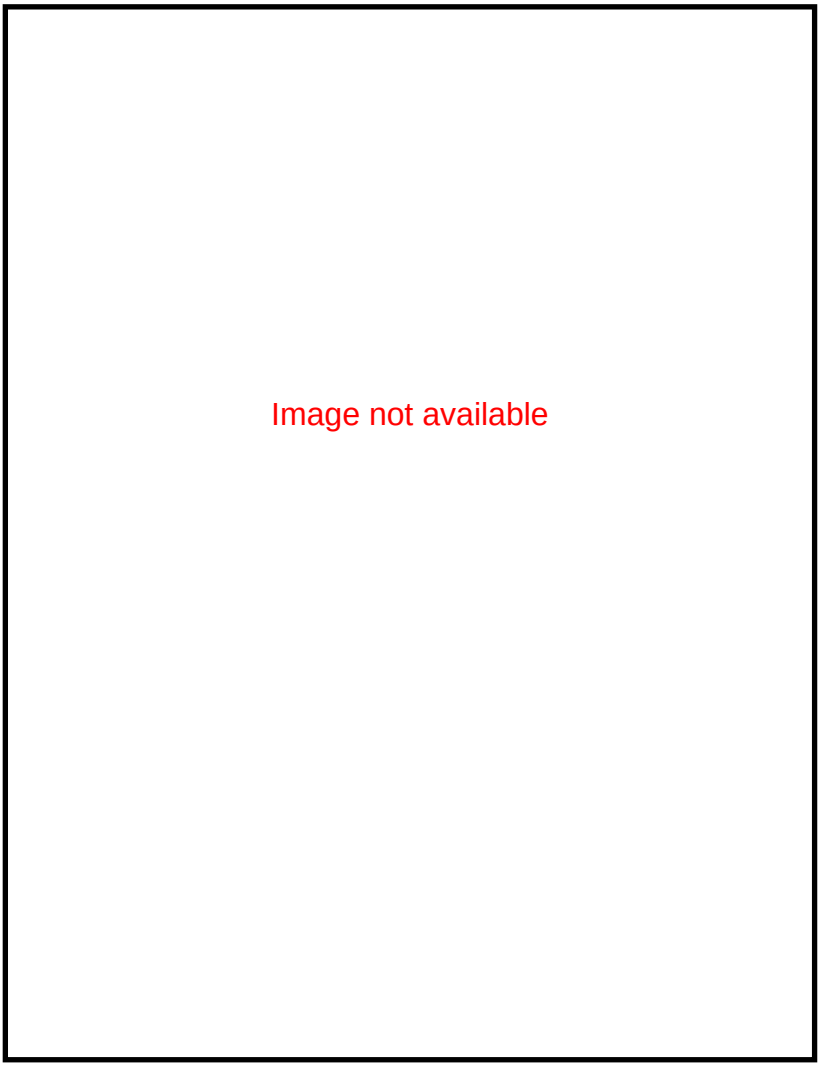

FIG. 12. The Hall of the Blackheads, the venue of the Soviet-Polish peace negotiations at Riga. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

and the peace treaties with Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Like Dąbski, Ioffe was extremely ambitious and somewhat difficult to work with. His relations with Chicherin were strained, mainly because Ioffe considered himself a more qualified diplomat than his superior.[28] In view also of a progressive nervous illness, and the great demands placed on him as a negotiator, Ioffe did not particularly enjoy his stay in Riga, and desired to return to St. Petersburg to

work in his capacity as a member of the Collegium of the Commissariat for Worker-Peasant Control.

Riga was, naturally, a much more suitable place than Minsk for peace negotiations based on compromise. Each delegation enjoyed comfortable lodgings, the Poles having installed themselves in the Hotel Rome, and the Soviets in the Hotel St. Petersburg—an amusing coincidence.[29] The negotiation venue was the stately Hall of the Blackheads in Riga's impressive Old Town. The Latvian foreign minister, Zigfrids Meierovics, supported the negotiations and even opened the first plenary session. The talks were covered by as many as eighty journalists, mainly British and American.[30] Latvia being a neutral "bourgeois" country, no journalist needed to fear arrest, and the entire personnel of each delegation could move around the city and its environs as they pleased. The only limitation was on former members of the Cheka known in Riga, who sometimes found it difficult to appear in public places.[31] Most importantly, each delegation had unimpeded communications with its own capital. Here, the Poles seemed to have an advantage, thanks to the good relations between Polish and Latvian military circles, enduring since the joint offensive in Latgalia. Latvian intelligence sold the Polish military representative at Riga, Major Aleksander Myszkowski, intercepted coded wires between the Soviet peace delegation and Moscow.[32] This did not help the Poles very much, however, since they were unable to break the Soviet codes.[33] In any case, the Bolsheviks realized the situation, and to be on the safe side, sent especially important messages by diplomatic couriers using the direct Riga-Moscow railroad. By contrast, the Poles could not effectively employ couriers because they had to travel by sea through the Free City of Danzig, a long and strenuous trip. This was not a major problem, however, since the Soviets were unable to intercept Polish radio messages.[34]

Soviet Preparations for the Riga Negotiations

The first unofficial meeting between Dąbski and Ioffe took place on 19 September, while negotiations began officially on 21 September—that is, on the eve of the Polish offensive on the Niemen. By then, the Soviets had not yet managed fully to prepare their new stance, even though they had been working on it for at least three weeks. On 1 September, the Politburo had resolved to confirm officially its "factual but unrecorded decision . . . on switching to the policy of compromise peace with Poland." To facilitate this goal, it had decided to send to Riga an entirely new delegation, headed by Ioffe, a consummate negotiator. In addition, the Politburo directed Trotsky to take a quick inspection trip to the Western Front to gauge "the progress of the work on rebuilding" its military strength. Trotsky reported

to the Politburo five days later. The tenor of his report must have been pessimistic, since, at the same session, the Politburo both named members of the peace delegation headed by Ioffe and decided that the peace treaties with Latvia and Lithuania were to be ratified by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), theoretically the highest state organ in Soviet Russia.[35]

It should be noted that this was a very difficult time for the entire Moscow leadership, and for Lenin in particular. They were now trying to comprehend why their offensive on Warsaw, formerly considered a sure thing, had gone wrong. Mutual recriminations, especially between the Western and the Southwestern Front, and between Trotsky and Stalin personally, were flying around. Everyone was under pressure to put the blame on someone else, since, as Lenin threatened at the time, "if you are not a decent people's commissar, then you will be chased out or put in jail." Most importantly, the Bolsheviks and Lenin himself reflected with dismay that "after crossing [the Curzon line for] fifty or a hundred versts, having stopped, we would have stood in ethnic Poland, and we would have [had] a true, assured victory. If we had stopped, we would already for sure have had peace now, an absolutely victorious peace, while retaining all the aura and all that influence on international politics. . . . All these errors naturally revolved in the minds of the Central Committee [members]."[36] There were voices within the Central Committee, and even the Politburo, calling for an inquiry commission to find the guilty.[37]

The majority within the Bolshevik leadership, however, including Lenin, were reluctant to proceed with the suggestion, perceiving wisely that such a commission would ruffle too many feathers and deepen the rifts among Lenin's lieutenants. An honest inquiry would also have ended up questioning decisions taken by the leader himself. Accordingly, it was decided that, as Lenin put it, "no, we would not create a commission to study the conditions of the offensive and retreat. . . . The Central Committee itself, while incredibly worried that we had made a mistake and suffered a defeat, is not undertaking to correct this mistake and appoint a commission. We must resolve the question of current policy—the negotiations in Riga."[38] Thus, Moscow had no intention of taking on an unpleasant, and potentially very divisive, investigation, preferring instead to focus on extricating itself from its war with Poland.

It is noteworthy that the need for a peaceful solution to the conflict was not at first recognized clearly by the Bolshevik leadership. On 25 August, Chicherin still insisted that "we have enough locomotives for carrying men to the Western Front, and we have enough men to be carried by those locomotives."[39] The problem was that those troops were second-rate, and not at all eager to fight. This must have been revealed by Trotsky's report of 6 September, prepared

in the wake of his inspection trip to the front line. By mid-September, it had become clear to Lenin that the Soviet troops "were not strong enough . . . to secure a decisive military victory that would have shattered the Versailles treaty." To be sure,

> our fundamental policy has remained the same. We use every opportunity to go from the defensive to the offensive. We have already undermined the Versailles treaty, and we will smash it at the first convenient opportunity. Now, however, in order to avoid a winter campaign, we have to make concessions. . . . To avoid a winter campaign, we are giving the Poles a brief ten-day period . . . to sign a peace. . . . If so, then we renounce Galicia and propose a border significantly to the east of the Curzon line. . . . Our chances are not great, but we win in either case. We have shown our troops that we have done everything to avoid the hardships of a winter campaign. For us the question of territorial borders is a twentieth-rate question by comparison with the question of the quickest end to the war. We have set the condition, and no matter how hard the winter campaign that will be imposed upon us despite our peace offer, we will still end it victoriously.[40]

This passage from Lenin's secret speech of 20 September to the Ninth All-Russian Conference of the Bolshevik Party confirms that Soviet troops were reluctant to continue fighting. The Red Army was exhausted and morale was low. No amount of propaganda and prodding by military commissars could change this.[41] It was therefore vital for Lenin to enter the new round of peace negotiations with the initiative, and with a program easily understandable to the troops. Making Poland a peace offer based on substantial territorial concessions, to be accepted within just ten days, was a clever idea. If the Poles quickly accepted, no more damage to Soviet troops would be done on the battlefield. This was an important consideration on the eve of the imminent Polish offensive on the Niemen, especially since the Bolsheviks, in view of their planned final offensive against Wrangel, needed to preserve what remained of their best troops, and wanted to have a clear situation on the Polish front. If, however, the Poles declined or delayed, it would be easy to explain to the troops that it was Poland that wished to continue the war. A new propaganda campaign could then be organized to mobilize the Red Army and Soviet masses to redouble their efforts.

On 20 September, the Central Committee created a special commission to draft an official Soviet declaration on the issue of peace negotiations with Poland. The commission included Chicherin, Radek, and Lev Kamenev. Their draft was based on Ioffe's report to Lenin on the Polish attitude toward peace, chances of a settlement, and probable peace conditions.[42] It was revised by Lenin and submitted to the Ninth All-Russian Party Conference

on 22 September—that is, the day the Polish offensive on the Niemen began. The declaration was accepted by a clear majority of delegates, judging by Chicherin's comment that, in the aftermath of Lenin's speech at the conference, "there were reservations, but rather weak ones."[43] On the next day, the document was submitted to the VTsIK, where it became a subject of "stormy debates." Bukharin opposed it, arguing it would create ephemeral hopes of peace, detrimental to the Russian war effort. Radek was the main speaker in favor of the declaration. In the end, the VTsIK adopted the document by a two-thirds majority.[44] It appears that a substantial part of the remaining third abstained, as the Soviets subsequently considered spreading a rumor that the entire one-third voted against the declaration, in an effort to impress on the Poles that the war party was quite strong and would most likely prevail if peace were not reached within ten days.[45]

The declaration consisted of two parts. According to Chicherin, the first part was designed "to prevent any attempt at resurrecting Piłsudski's policy" of federalism, while the second part aimed at achieving "a quick and realistic agreement with Poland."[46] Thus, the declaration began by insisting that the Soviets had already recognized the independence and sovereignty of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. The basis of peace should be "an immediate solemn confirmation by both Poland and Russia of the independence of Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and the recognition of the independence of East Galicia." Moreover, both Poland and Soviet Russia should recognize the existing forms of governmental representation, that is, parliaments or congresses of Soviets. In East Galicia, it would be acceptable to organize a "plebiscite" based on "the usual bourgeois-democratic principle" to determine such a form for this new state.

Considering, however, that the Polish peace delegation, "in spite of obvious and indisputable facts," was likely to question the self-determination of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus, thus making impossible any agreement on the basis of self-determination, the VTsIK proposed to put aside the issue of self-determination and base the agreement on just two conditions: (1) Soviet revocation of the terms of peace set out during the Minsk negotiations, including the reduction of the Polish Army, the surrender of its arms, and Soviet control of the Wołkowysk—Białystok—Grajewo railroad; (2) Soviet readiness to conclude an armistice and preliminary peace based on the recognition of the border between Poland and Soviet Russia "drawn considerably to the east" of the 8 December line, and leaving East Galicia west of this border. This Soviet offer was valid only for ten days, meaning that Moscow reserved the right to withdraw or change these conditions if a preliminary peace were not signed by

5 October.[47] Overall, the declaration made clear that the Soviets wanted to reach peace on the basis of a territorial compromise in the Borderlands, thus largely canceling their previous plans for acquiring this entire territory, together with East Galicia.

At the same time, however, the Bolsheviks made preparations to play their Soviet Belarusian card in case the Poles did not agree to their proposal. Thus, on 16 September, the Revolutionary-Military Committee of Soviet Belarus gave a mandate to Aleksandr G. Cherviakov, the committee's head, to negotiate on behalf of the country with the Polish peace delegation at Riga.[48] At about the same time, the Belarusian Congress of Soviets was convened in Minsk. Chicherin instructed the Congress that the formation of a Soviet Belarusian government was a necessary condition for Soviet Belarus to be involved in international politics.[49] The Bolsheviks were worried by intelligence that the Belarusian émigré government of Lastouski, originally established with the help of Lithuania, had just decided to cooperate with Poland. Warsaw was to support his government financially in return for "four or five counties of Grodno Province." On 7 September, Lastouski sent an official note to Chicherin demanding that his representative be allowed to join the peace conference at Riga. Ioffe feared that the same demand would be made by the Poles.[50] The situation was complicated even more by the Belarusian Socialist-Revolutionaries. Their representative, Markevich, met with Chicherin in Moscow. They demanded Belarusian participation in the Riga peace conference and the establishment of an independent Belarusian government at Minsk representing all Belarusian political parties, including the Bolsheviks. Naturally, the Soviets were unwilling to support these demands, but they found it politic to negotiate with the Belarusian Socialist-Revolutionaries, especially since they feared that France might finally decide to accept the idea of an independent Belarus. Chicherin saw the best way of counteracting any French or Polish support for an independent Belarusian state in promoting Soviet Belarus.[51]

Moscow also tried to ready its East Galician card. Mikhail Baran, the representative of the now hardly functioning Revolutionary-Military Committee of Galicia (Galrevkom), which was then stationed at Vinnitsa in the Southwestland, was sent to Riga with a mandate to conduct peace negotiations on behalf of the committee.[52] Baran, just like Cherviakov, was kept in reserve to be used in case the Poles rejected the VTsIK declaration and tried to resurrect the idea of federalism. Realizing the weakness of this card in view of the total fiasco the Galrevkom had suffered in East Galicia, the Soviets considered coming to terms with the East Galician delegation sent to Riga by the émigré government in Vienna. Counting on the support of Ernest Breiter, the Socialist member of

this delegation, the Bolsheviks hoped to be able to form a joint East Galician peace delegation consisting of representatives of both the Galrevkom and the émigré government.[53]

Moreover, in order to greater emphasize Soviet Ukraine's alleged independence, the Bolsheviks considered naming Manuil'skii head of the Ukrainian group within the joint Russian-Ukrainian peace delegation. Ioffe, while seeing the inconvenience of having two delegations in one, argued for this solution in view of what he perceived as "our rather weak position on the Ukrainian issue."[54]

In an effort to strengthen still further the Soviet bargaining position, Ioffe met with the Lithuanian representative in Riga, Dovas Zaunius, to impress on him that "for Lithuania, the only sensible policy is one oriented toward Russia, because Poland's victory means the destruction of Lithuania." To counteract Poland's expected questioning of the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, the Bolsheviks "can bring forward a confirmation of that treaty by the present government sitting in Minsk.[55] For that, however, it is necessary for Lithuania to hold to us sincerely," he pointed out. Then he advised Chicherin that "it is possible and necessary to draw Lithuania onto our side on this basis, having convinced them that only through our mediation can they secure their border, if only in Grodno Province." Chicherin replied to Ioffe that the matter was already being dealt with directly in Kaunas by the Soviet representative, Aleksandr E. Aksel'rod. "We offer Lithuania an understanding. The position of the Lithuanian government, however, is one of hesitation. They did not come to terms with the Poles, but fear to conclude any definite agreement with us." The situation was thus uncertain.[56]

It is remarkable that Chicherin and Ioffe differed in their initial assessment of Poland's willingness and ability to revive the policy of federalism. The chief of Soviet diplomacy doubted whether the Poles would back up the Belarusian government of Lastouski with any great effort, "since, to all appearances, the program of buffer states has lost credit. It was never supported by the National Democrats, and the Polish Socialists have now dropped their support. The Entente does not want to dismember Russia beyond certain limits. America is definitely against it. Strictly speaking, no one supports Belarus." Ioffe, on the contrary, thought that "the issue of buffer states is again gaining topicality. Apparently, Poland is going back to the demand for the borders of 1772 . . . under the guise of self-determination of Belarus and Ukraine." Consequently, Ioffe argued, "our assumption that quick peace could be attained by renunciation of our demands is too optimistic. Negotiations will probably acquire the character of another Brest-Litovsk quarrel about self-determination. One may talk on this

basis for a long time and get neither quick peace nor an armistice," the head of the Soviet delegation concluded pessimistically.[57]

The Beginning of Negotiations and the VTsIK Declaration

The first two meetings with Dąbski[58] confirmed Ioffe in his initial pessimistic impression. He expected "that on the Ukrainian-Belarusian question the Poles will try to realize their program [of restoring the border] of 1772." Moreover, he emphasized "the nervousness of the [Polish] delegation and their undoubted wish to delay." Ioffe also perceived their "confusion and uncertainty" as well as "lack of the initiative." This he explained as the result of "an unstable situation within both Poland and the delegation itself." A further proof of this was that his acceptance of a confidential Polish-Soviet meeting, proposed by the Socialists within the Polish delegation, led to nothing. Overall, Ioffe concluded, "the Poles obviously do not want a definitive and lasting peace. Or, rather, they don't dare to want it on orders of their boss—France." Given that Poland's policy of federalism was unacceptable, Ioffe suggested steering negotiations into the blind alley of the issue of self-determination and using this as the grounds for "definitively discrediting the Poles and exposing the policy of annexation." If, however, Trotsky's inspection at the front had revealed that "we can make war," then it would be appropriate to hold on to the old Soviet demands.[59]

Furthermore, Ioffe was lukewarm about the very idea of the VTsIK declaration, which he initially understood as "a desire to get an armistice at any cost." He approved of it only as a tool of agitation, accepting that "a solemn address by the VTsIK, emphasizing our wish to end bloodshed and . . . our readiness to renounce many of our demands in the name of the love of humanity and our love of peace, would be useful." He warned, however, against "laying all the cards on the table and renouncing the opportunity to expose and discredit Polish policy, and to split up further the already quarreling Polish parties." Ioffe also pointed out that "the direct appeal of the VTsIK to Poland brings to naught [the chances of extracting] various Polish concessions in the process of negotiation." Moreover, he argued, "even having accepted our conditions of immediate armistice, they may delay on other issues, especially on the issue of the demarcation line, and continue the offensive." Another danger was that "the Poles may reply in ten days that they accept our armistice conditions and make these conditions the basis of further negotiations, delaying them on concrete issues." To forestall this, the VTsIK declaration should include a

statement on "readiness to stop the bloodshed immediately and to conduct negotiations under the condition of suspension of military operations." Overall, Ioffe was not happy about the VTsIK declaration, and especially about "the ten-day ultimatum" which he considered "unfortunate." Sticking to the old hard-line approach, in all of his initial statements Ioffe "firmly" demanded "guarantees against another Polish invasion," meaning unilateral Polish "disarmament, demobilization, etc."[60]

In reply to Ioffe's criticisms, Chicherin stated against him that the idea underlying the VTsIK declaration was "to make definitive offers right away, declaring that we will not make any further concessions; war or peace—it's up to them to decide." At the same time, the chief of Soviet diplomacy admitted that he considered the approach represented by the declaration to be "premature." He tended to agree with Ioffe that, "taking into account Polish weakness," the Soviets might still cling to the notion of unilateral disarmament.[61] Given this remarkable lack of enthusiasm of both Chicherin and Ioffe as late as 22 September, it appears it was Lenin himself who had come up with the idea of such a declaration and demanded that it be implemented.

Nonetheless, Ioffe's pessimism as to Polish intentions was somewhat diminished as a result, as he put it, of "the unexpected unwillingness of Poland to create conflict over the issue of credentials." He saw it as an "extraordinarily characteristic and important" fact, perhaps a harbinger of a situation which would fully justify the VTsIK declaration as "timely."[62] Indeed, the Polish delegation instantly recognized Soviet Ukrainian credentials, although its instructions permitted this only after some bargaining. This quick recognition came also as a surprise to Petliura and his Ukrainian government. For them it was a shocking surprise,[63] however, given that Sapieha, in a show of support, had sent Chicherin a note about the planned departure for Riga of the Ukrainian delegation headed by Andrii Livyts'kyi, the deputy premier of the embattled Ukrainian People's Republic. The Poles apparently had reconsidered their support for Petliura's Ukrainians in view of Chicherin's scathing reply describing Livyts'kyi as a "rebel," fit only to apply for "an amnesty."[64]

The Bolsheviks were further encouraged by an interview given by Stanisław Grabski on 23 September to Krichevskii, ostensibly a Soviet journalist, who in fact reported to Chicherin himself. The most influential member of the Polish peace delegation and the former head of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee declared: "We have come with a definite intention to conclude peace, that is, to conclude a preliminary peace together with an armistice. . . . We mean only to defend our independence and security and do not intend to conduct war for its own sake. Our point of view on the issue of peace did not at

all change after the Warsaw victory, and we shall defend the same point of view that we presented at Minsk."[65]

Reassured by this interview, Ioffe presented the VTsIK declaration to the Polish peace delegation on 24 September, during the second plenary session.[66] The Soviets gave great publicity to the document, aiming at influencing the masses in Poland and Soviet Russia itself.[67] This time it was the Poles who were pleasantly surprised. Dąbski, having welcomed the Soviet revocation of the terms demanded at Minsk, responded by reading an official declaration which had been prepared in advance, and thus did not take into account the VTsIK declaration. The Polish declaration emphasized that at Riga, just as at Minsk, Poland did not seek to base peace terms on the changeable situation at the battle front. Indeed, it desired a quick and lasting peace based on compromise. Poland's main objectives in the war included "ensuring its independence, security, and borders." Besides these goals, Polish foreign policy aimed also at the "general freedom of nations" by recognizing the principle of national self-determination and putting it in practice in relations with the neighboring nations of Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. Furthermore, specific conditions of peace were listed, following closely the instructions received earlier in Warsaw. As for the border, the declaration stressed it would be drawn "not on the basis of historical revindications but on the basis of just reconciliation of vital interests of the negotiating sides," ensuring their mutual security from attack.[68]

The Soviet reception of the Polish declaration was not unfavorable. As Chicherin put it, "one gets the impression that the Poles do not want to break with their great power dreams but, at the same time, actually want to adopt the opposite policy of realistic compromise. They, as it were, make a platonic bow to the dreams of Piłsudski, actually taking the path of realistic compromise."[69]

Ioffe realized very quickly that the Polish delegation was "indignant" about the "ten-day ultimatum."[70] In an effort to learn more about how the Poles saw the VTsIK declaration, Krichevskii interviewed Barlicki on 25 September. The latter assured him that all members of the Polish delegation found the declaration encouraging and were strengthened in their conviction that the Soviet delegation at Riga, unlike that at Minsk, indeed wanted to conclude peace. The first half of the declaration showed that the peace faction in Moscow had won, and the second indicated that the path to peace had been clearly determined. "Mutual suspicions have now definitively disappeared," was how Barlicki summed up the situation in the wake of the two declarations. He further stressed "categorically" that France had no influence on the Polish stance in the Riga negotiations. Moreover, he declared that the Belarusian issue was not one of the first magnitude. As for Ukraine, Poland's relations with Petliura and their

mutual obligations were, at the given moment, still in force because his troops were at the front line, and otherwise they would not be there. Poland preferred democratic self-determination in Ukraine, but understood that this solution was unacceptable to the Soviets. Still, the Poles would like to see some proof of Soviet Ukraine's popular legitimacy and independence. Instead, they saw, for instance, that the Russian-Ukrainian delegation's credentials were signed in Moscow, said Barlicki. Krichevskii understood from this that the Polish Left needed such proof "to liquidate their relations with Petliura."[71]

The Soviets were right in thinking that the Polish delegation welcomed the VTsIK declaration, while being unhappy about the "ten-day ultimatum." To the Poles, in view of their successfully developing offensive east of Grodno, accepting the ultimatum meant giving the Red Army an opportunity to regroup, thus forfeiting their chief means of pressuring the Soviets. Therefore, the High Command was "most categorically" against it.[72] Yet, a rejection would make unavoidable a difficult and risky winter campaign. While France advised Poland to continue fighting and to enter an alliance with Wrangel, Sapieha remained unimpressed, given the absence of a clear-cut Allied statement supporting further hostilities. Overall, the government tended to assume that it was possible to reach peace at Riga without any additional military pressure. Dąbski felt that the Soviets would make no difficulties in recognizing as Polish such areas as East Galicia, West Volhynia, and possibly parts of Belarus. However, there was no consensus among the members of the delegation as to Polish maximum aims, now coming more into the picture due to the most recent, daily successes of the Polish Army in Belarus. In particular, the acquisition of Minsk, and, consequently, revival of federalism in regard to Belarus, was no longer out of the question. Discussions on this subject must have been very divisive, given that the delegation decided to take no record of its sessions and to exclude its experts and secretaries. As Ładoś later recalled, the members spent nearly as much energy on internal quarrels as on actual negotiations with the Soviets.[73]

By the next session, on 27 September, the Polish delegation had not been able to hammer out a formal reply to the VTsIK declaration. Dąbski tried to make the best of the situation by suggesting that Soviet "genuine proposals" be discussed in commissions, closed to journalists and the public. This was a clever solution, considering that the Poles could not openly argue against the Curzon line, which they had accepted at the Spa conference, and that Ioffe, being a much more skillful diplomat, would have the upper hand in verbal skirmishes with Dąbski. Ioffe agreed to this suggestion. He also responded to the Polish declaration of 24 September, concurring with the idea that "peace terms cannot be based on the state of affairs at the battle front," but should be based

on compromise, taking into account the vital interests of both sides. He also accepted, in principle, the Poles' specific list of peace conditions, emphasizing that concrete solutions should be determined in negotiations after the signing of the armistice and the preliminary peace.[74]

Ioffe's Draft of the Preliminary Peace

On 28 September, at the first meeting of the newly established Main Commission, Ioffe kept the initiative by presenting his draft of the preliminary peace. The draft began by recognizing the independence and sovereignty of Soviet Belarus, Soviet Ukraine, and Lithuania, based on the principle of national self-determination. Further, the independence of East Galicia was recognized in principle, while the system of government (that is, either democratic or Soviet) was to be chosen by the local population in a democratic referendum.[75] The Polish-Soviet border was defined as beginning at the confluence of the rivers Świsłocz and Niemen, on the Lithuanian border, as drawn by the Soviet-Lithuanian treaty of 12 July 1920; continuing just west of the localities of Świsłocz, Rudnia, Białowieża, Kamieniec Litewski, Brest-Litovsk, Piszcza, Luboml, Włodzimierz Wołyński, and Hrybowice; and then following the former Austrian-Russian border, or the northeastern border of East Galicia, to the river Dniester on the Romanian border (see Map 5). The remaining points of the draft dealt with such issues as a ban on organizations aiming at armed struggle against the other party, mutual renunciation of war indemnities, exchange of prisoners of war, an amnesty, and a financial settlement.[76]

The border line cited in the Soviet draft was drawn by Ioffe himself, and was never meant by Moscow. In fact, the center had initially defined the border as "the Hindenburg line," or the line of the German trenches of 1915–1917. On 23 September the Central Committee decided to replace this line in an already prepared telegram to Ioffe with the line of Supreme Commander Kamenev, who envisioned a border running along the river Szczara, the Ogiński Canal, the rivers Jasiołda and Styr, and the northeastern border of East Galicia. Both lines were almost identical, except in the north, where the German trenches ran to the east of Baranowicze and the Baranowicze-Lida railroad, while the Supreme Commander's line ran to the west of these (see Map 5). Lenin considered this the "maximum border,"[77] meaning presumably that these were the maximum territorial concessions the Bolsheviks were prepared to make. Ioffe, however, drew his line very significantly to the west of the Supreme Commander's line to give himself room for concessions to the Poles. As a result, the Soviet draft of the preliminary peace proposed a border just east of the Curzon line.[78]

The Poles were again taken by surprise, but this time it was an unpleasant one. Dąbski requested a substantial break in negotiations, ostensibly to study the draft and discuss it with his colleagues.[79] The press bureau of the Polish delegation issued a communiqué saying that fruitful negotiations could continue only if the Soviets dropped their demands concerning East Galicia and offered Poland a border guaranteeing its security, among other things. Moreover, Sapieha announced in Warsaw that the Soviet proposals of 28 September were contrary to the VTsIK declaration. He stated categorically that under no circumstances would the Poles negotiate with the Soviets on the issue of East Galicia.[80]

Not only the Poles were unhappy with the Soviet draft of the preliminary peace. So was Chicherin, with whom Ioffe had not consulted.[81] Having received its text only after the meeting of the Main Commission, Chicherin instantly pointed out to Lenin the contradiction between the draft and the VTsIK declaration. The latter's main idea was to put aside the question of national self-determination, while the draft included several points relating to this issue, thus "opening the door for squabbling on this subject." Chicherin also claimed that Ioffe had erred by including into the draft a number of issues, such as financial matters, likely to result in long discussions. "It is strange to demand the immediate signing of a treaty consisting of a whole mass of most varied issues. The VTsIK declaration abbreviated the content of the preliminaries to the greatest degree, while Ioffe, on the contrary, broadened it extraordinarily," lamented Chicherin.[82]

On 29 September, a Polish journalist, probably sent by Barlicki, let the Soviet delegation know that their Polish counterparts were "upset about the line proposed yesterday by Ioffe, considering it to be a Curzon line, just with different dressing." According to him, the Poles were prepared to wait, "since they cannot compromise themselves by taking the initiative on the territorial issue after [Władysław] Grabski accepted the Curzon line in Spa; they will see what happens after the fifth [of October]." He further alarmed the Soviets by telling them that "General Kuliński, the representative of Piłsudski, said yesterday there is 70 percent likelihood that the [Riga peace] conference will be a fiasco!"[83]

Worried, the Soviets decided to send another quasi-journalist, Nikolai I. Iordanskii, to gauge the situation at the source. On 29 September, he interviewed a group of three Socialists: Barlicki, Wasilewski, and Feliks Perl, the latter being an expert with the delegation. They began by emphasizing that all political parties in Poland presently supported peace. The VTsIK declaration had made an overall good impression, with the exception of the "ten-day

ultimatum." The resulting favorable mood had been disrupted, however, by the Soviet draft of the preliminary peace. In addition to certain unacceptable clauses, the Poles were also unhappy about the Soviet method of negotiation. They would prefer to negotiate concrete issues in the commissions, rather than having to prepare a critique of the entire Soviet draft and to work out counterproposals. This process was time-consuming because, while on the Soviet side everything was decided by one person, on the Polish side it was necessary to find a consensus. As for the merits, Galicia had never belonged to Russia, and consequently it could not be a subject of negotiations. The Soviets' claim that Ukraine and Belarus were independent and sovereign must be supported by the underlying reality, as the Poles would not like to see Moscow bureaucrats in the role of representatives of these nations. For its part, Poland had no obligation to continue fighting for Ukraine's independence; indeed, the agreement of 21 April 1920 had obliged it to give Petliura's government, as the national Ukrainian government, certain territories if they could be acquired militarily or diplomatically. Yet, if they could not be acquired, nothing was to be given. Poland had no designs on Lithuanian independence, but it could not recognize the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, "since by this treaty Russia ceded to Lithuania purely Polish regions." The territorial quarrel between Warsaw and Kaunas was to be solved exclusively by the two sides. No matter how much France desired to remove the Bolsheviks from power, it wanted Poland as a strong ally against Germany and was aware of the risks and devastation involved in prolonging the war. Consequently, Poland, trying independently to conclude peace with Soviet Russia, did not expect France to apply pressure on it. The Polish Socialists believed that either peace would be concluded at Riga, or the war party, already conducting talks with Russian anti-Bolsheviks in Warsaw, would take over. Overall, they concluded, the fundamental positions of both sides were favorable, and to break off negotiations would be "simply a stupidity."[84]

Chicherin concurred with this conclusion. Stung by his criticism, Ioffe tried to exonerate himself with Moscow by explaining that the draft was designed to "provoke the Poles," unskilled and inexperienced as they were, and that he had been working hard "definitively to compromise Polish policy and Polish diplomacy." Chicherin reminded him, however, that his primary task was to reach peace quickly. To facilitate this goal, Ioffe was to declare to the Poles that, in accord with the VTsIK declaration, the Soviets were ready to ignore the first points of his draft dealing with the issue of self-determination. He was to make clear that all Soviet attention was focused on the border, and that all other points were immaterial. "Discussions about them might hinder

the immediate signing; hence, it is necessary to simplify, so that it would be possible to sign now," exhorted Chicherin. The issue of compromising the Poles was at this point secondary, although it was necessary to collect agitational material to be used, if the Poles failed to sign before the deadline, "to affect their rear and our friends, the workers in the West."[85]

Thus prodded by Chicherin, Ioffe asked Dąbski on 30 September, in a publicized note, when the next meeting of the Main Commission would be, as he was ready to accept any proposal.[86] The reply was evasive. Dąbski clearly wanted to soften Ioffe by making him wait.[87] With this goal in mind, the Poles also sent middlemen with various information to the Soviets, but did not want to meet directly.[88] One such middleman reported that Dąbski thought it "a fatal mistake" of Soviet diplomacy that all the contentious issues put aside by the VTsIK declaration had been included in the draft.[89] Another warned the Soviets not to support the participation in the peace conference of the East Galician delegation, which had arrived in Riga two days earlier, as this "would cause the fall of the present government in Warsaw."[90] Yet another middleman informed them that the Polish delegation was determined to revive the federalist concept in the Borderlands, especially in Belarus, where a plebiscite was to be organized after a withdrawal of both armies.[91] They considered the border cited by Ioffe in his draft to be acceptable as that between Poland and "a self-determining Belarus." Leshchinskii and Rozenberg of the Soviet delegation, who interviewed the latter middleman, were under the impression that the Poles "cannot themselves reveal their territorial demands because of Britain, and are giving us to understand that, if we do not offer them a more advantageous line, bufferism [that is, the policy of federalism] will be for them the only public way out of this situation."[92]

Feeling the heat and trying to break the impasse, Ioffe met secretly on 30 September with Stephen G. Tallents, head of the British mission to the Baltic countries at Riga, with whom he agreed that Britain should exert pressure on Poland.[93] Ioffe also devised a plan that, if nothing were signed on 5 October, he would demonstratively go to Moscow for a few days, while the delegation would remain in Riga.[94] Thus, the head of the Soviet delegation, realizing he had pushed the Poles too far, made frantic efforts to repair the damage. Nonetheless, the situation was uncertain and quite dramatic.

In view of the initial offer of compromise made privately at Minsk by the leftist group within the Polish delegation, it would appear that both sides should have begun peace negotiations at Riga with significant expectations of success. It is therefore rather remarkable that Ioffe, as head of the Soviet delegation, was distinctly pessimistic. Given the recent string of Polish military successes, he

expected the Poles to revert to the policy of federalism, which was thoroughly unacceptable to the Soviets.

The Polish delegation, on the other hand, was hampered by three main difficulties. First, it could not openly make its territorial demands, since they encroached on Borderlands territories east of the Curzon line, drawn by the Allies as the demarcation line between Poland and Soviet Russia. Second, recent Polish military successes in the Borderlands opened previously unforeseen possibilities of territorial settlement, making conceivable even a revival of federalism with regard to Belarus. Finally, due to its size and composition, the Polish delegation lacked cohesion, making it difficult for Dąbski, as its head, to follow a clear policy.

Under these circumstances, the VTsIK declaration, presented to the Poles on 24 September, was a crucial factor in breaking the impasse at the beginning of the Riga peace conference. Ordered by Lenin himself, the declaration was, in effect, a reply to the Polish leftists' offer of compromise made at Minsk. It promised Poland substantial territorial concessions in the Borderlands in return for its renunciation of the policy of federalism. The Poles were required to make up their minds within ten days. This somewhat unorthodox and abrupt proposal evoked certain reservations from both Ioffe and Chicherin. In addition, the ultimatum-like nature of the ten-day requirement, and its undeniably propagandist aspect, made a rather bad impression on the Poles. Overall, however, the declaration was a useful point of departure, and was accepted as such by the Polish delegation.

This positive development was soon marred by Ioffe's draft of the preliminary peace, presented on 28 September. The draft, unapproved by Moscow, asked the Poles to renounce federalism in exchange for a border just east of the Curzon line. This was totally unacceptable to the Poles and they were gravely upset. Dąbski requested a break in negotiations in an effort to soften the Bolsheviks by giving them the silent treatment. Ioffe, under severe criticism from Chicherin, reacted by trying to resume negotiations. It was unclear, however, whether the impasse could be broken. The very fate of the Riga peace conference hung in the balance.

CHAPTER VI

Preliminary Peace Negotiations: Breakthrough

The First Confidential Meeting

The break in the aftermath of Ioffe's draft of the preliminary peace, requested by Dąbski, put pressure on the Poles as well as the Soviets. Sapieha, in a bid to speed up negotiations, had just decided to go to Riga himself and take over from Dąbski.[1] Thus, the Polish delegation head desperately needed a breakthrough. On the evening of 30 September 1920, Dąbski, using a middleman, proposed to Ioffe a confidential meeting,[2] hoping that such a meeting would offer a better chance than an official session. It also relieved the Pole from having to fence verbally with his Soviet counterpart, a more skillful negotiator, during official plenary sessions or in the Main Commission.

The two delegation heads met late in the evening on 1 October, conversing in German. They were accompanied by general secretaries Lorents and Ładoś. Dąbski began by declaring that the Poles had difficulty replying to Ioffe's draft of the preliminary peace because they did not comprehend Soviet wishes. Their understanding of the VTsIK declaration was this: the first part was "literary fiction," while the essence was found in the two points of the second part. Since the second point dealt with the border between Poland and Russia, the draft should not have raised the issue of independent Ukraine and Belarus.[3] Overall, there was a gap between the declaration and the draft. Ioffe explained that East Galicia had been mentioned in his draft purely for tactical reasons, in anticipation of the Polish coming out with the issue of Petliura's Ukraine. Putting it bluntly, Poland needed Galician oil, and Russia needed Ukrainian grain. Moreover, while Poland might want to create

buffer states, Russia had already created them. It was a fact that Ukraine and Belarus were Soviet and lay in the Russian sphere of influence. Both of these Soviet states must be recognized by the proposed peace treaty. Dąbski, for his part, insisted that the issue of East Galicia must not appear in the treaty, and not even be discussed. Furthermore, the Poles would not like to see Ukraine and Belarus mentioned in the peace treaty, and preferred the border to be defined as one between Poland and Russia. If this was not acceptable to the Soviets, then it would be better to define it as "the eastern border of Poland." Dąbski also emphasized his wish to reach "durable and eternal" peace, based on understanding. As for the border line, he was not ready yet to present his final conditions and would do so at the next meeting. Ioffe, trying to gauge Polish territorial ambitions, intimated that his instructions did not allow him to concede more territory than that to the west of the railroad Lida—Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Równe—Brody. Dąbski replied that the proposed border line was entirely unacceptable, since Poland must be in possession of this strategic railroad to ensure its security against such a powerful neighbor as Russia. Alternatively, he would be prepared to discuss a withdrawal of both armies from Belarus and the creation of an independent Belarusian state with its western border on the Curzon line and its eastern border separating it from Russia. Ioffe considered both proposals unacceptable but promised to relay them to Moscow.[4]

Dąbski did not mention the Belarusian alternative in his account of the meeting in his memoirs. Ładoś, however, claimed after Dąbski's death, in a 1936 press interview, that he, as general secretary, had presented to Ioffe the following alternative: either a direct border between Poland and Soviet Russia, or the federalist solution involving "the creation of Belarus under Poland's protectorate, as it were." Ioffe replied that both proposals were "suitable for discussion" but he had to ask for instructions from his government. At the following meeting, he declared that "the Soviet government was inclined rather to the first concept," that is, to the direct border between Poland and Soviet Russia. This absence of categorical rejection of the federalist solution made Ładoś believe that, if properly pressed, the Soviets might agree to cede the Minsk region to a newly created Belarusian state under Polish protection.[5]

Ioffe's report, however, sent to Moscow right after the meeting, differs very substantially from Ładoś's account, which was given in a press interview sixteen years after the fact. Obviously, we must accept Ioffe's version as true. Moreover, it is clear from Lenin's reply to Ioffe that even an independent Belarusian state, not to mention a Polish protectorate, was utterly unacceptable to him. He simply ignored such a possibility, giving Ioffe instructions exclusively on how to

deal with the first option presented by Dąbski, that is, the direct border between Poland and the Soviet state (see below).

In 1937, Ładoś made his story even more dramatic, claiming, in an article on the role of Wasilewski in the Riga negotiations, that on the issue of Belarus "all possibilities were open and the decision depended almost exclusively on the will of the Polish delegation, since the Soviets, under the pressure of military operations, were ready for any concession." In particular, "the annexation of Minsk to Poland . . . appeared to be entirely feasible and depended, properly speaking, on the will and decision of the Polish delegation."[6] These statements, based solely on his impression, created a myth in Polish historiography that the Soviets intended to cede to Poland "at least" all Belarusian territories west of the Dvina—Berezina—Dnieper line, but that to Ioffe's great amazement, the Polish delegation decided not to accept his offer.[7] This myth is also found in a milder version; namely, that the Bolsheviks were giving Minsk to Poland "without haggling" but the Polish delegation "rejected" their offer.[8]

Although the evidence already presented is sufficient to explode this myth, it should be emphasized that the whole idea of the VTsIK declaration was to trade territorial concessions for renunciation of the Polish policy of federalism. Lenin personally instructed Ioffe that any "understanding" would be "impossible" if the Polish delegation refused to recognize both Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus.[9] Chicherin saw the crux of negotiations in exchanging territorial concessions "for Poland's renunciation of the policy of bufferism [that is, of federalism], of setting up buffer states, in particular that of Petliura and some other states."[10] Thus, Chicherin's and Lenin's rejection of Polish federalism was most categorical. It follows that Soviet territorial concessions, while substantial, had to be limited and could not include Minsk as the capital city of Belarus. Doing so would defeat their purpose, and give Piłsudski an opportunity to revive his federalist concept.

Finally, Ładoś's impressions could sometimes be completely wide of the mark. For example, he recalled in his press interview of 1936 that Ioffe "thought highly of Dąbski."[11] Yet, Ioffe's messages to Moscow reveal that he considered Dąbski "slow-witted," and even a "fool"![12] Moreover, Ioffe's characterization of the Polish delegation in the early stages not only as "unskilled and inexperienced" but also as displaying "lack of initiative," "nervousness," and "confusion and uncertainty," must surely reflect his unfavorable perception of Dąbski as its head.[13]

In any case, on 2 October, the day after the first confidential meeting, Lenin instructed Ioffe to accept a border line that would give Poland "the Lida—Baranowicze railroad, on condition that peace (and truce) will be signed for

certain in the briefest possible time (approximately three days)."[14] This alacrity is remarkable, considering that a day earlier Chicherin had wired Ioffe that the Supreme Commander's line, leaving the railroad to the Soviets, was "the last word," which Ioffe would be wise to present as such right away, without haggling.[15] Lenin's speed in making this concession was likely a result of Soviet determination to prevent any revival of Polish federalism, and their abhorrence of the idea of an independent Belarus.[16] As Chicherin had pointed out to him in late August 1920, the idea of withdrawal of all nonindigenous troops from Belarus and Ukraine was "too risky" to be supported in view of the "internal instability in these countries."[17] In addition, the continued Polish successes on the battlefield made the Soviets increasingly committed to signing by the approaching deadline of 5 October.

Polish Territorial Terms

On 2 October, the Polish delegation was given a briefing by Dąbski on his first confidential meeting with Ioffe. The Poles finally realized it was time to end their quarrels and hammer out a consensus regarding the border. The situation was quite straightforward in the Southwestland, as all members agreed that here the border should roughly follow the line drawn by the agreement of 21 April 1920 between Poland and the Ukrainian People's Republic led by Petliura. According to this agreement, any territory acquired by Poland east of this line was to be ceded to Petliura. It was therefore obvious that any Polish attempt to reach substantially beyond this line would be utterly unacceptable to the Soviets.[18]

Such a consensus was difficult to achieve, however, in the Northwestland, given the most recent victory in the Battle of the Niemen, which seemed to open new possibilities of settlement unforeseen when the delegation received its instructions in Warsaw.[19] Misinformed by the Second Department that the Soviets were prepared to make "every concession" in Belarus,[20] the federalist side argued it was desirable to acquire Minsk, the country's capital city. This side included all the three delegates appointed by the government: Wasilewski, Kamieniecki, and Dąbski, as well as the lone representative of the Parliament, Ludwik Waszkiewicz.[21] While technically a minority within the delegation, their position was strengthened by the presence of several vocal federalists among the experts, especially from the military. However, as they consisted almost entirely of government appointees, they could not credibly claim to represent the voters. While Waszkiewicz represented the Parliament, he lacked the stature of a leading politician,[22] and his party, which was anyway not very popular, did not support federalism. Most importantly, Dąbski, whose position as

the head of the delegation entailed the role of mediator, did not want to engage very strongly in the quarrel and, as will be seen, supported the federalist cause in a half-hearted manner.

Wasilewski led the federalist side. He realized that federalism could not be pursued in Ukraine, as it would lead to prolongation of the war. Yet, he wanted to create centers of both Ukrainian and Belarusian national movements on Polish territory, since otherwise they might be created by the Soviets on their side of the border. With both Kiev and Minsk in Soviet hands, he expected them to incite irredentism in ethnically Ukrainian and Belarusian territories within the Polish state. The best way to counteract this, he argued, was to acquire Minsk and create a semblance of Belarusian statehood there, federated with Poland.[23]

The antifederalist side, consisting of five members of Parliament, argued against acquiring Minsk. Their position was strong, as they could credibly claim to represent the "sovereign" Parliament to which the government was responsible according to the Polish political system. They were led by Stanisław Grabski, an outstanding National Democrat and professor of economics at the University of Lwów, characterized by middlemen as "brilliant and dangerous."[24] A renowned expert with the delegation saw Grabski as "the leading and decisive personage," and a federalist member grudgingly admitted that he "surpassed his colleagues in intelligence."[25] Most remarkably, during the Minsk negotiations, Grabski had become close friends with Barlicki of the Polish Socialist Party, and Kiernik of the "Piast" Peasant Party, while the remaining members of the antifederalist majority had political outlooks similar to his own. All of this facilitated agreement on the basis of Grabski's proposals.

As the only one among the antifederalist delegates who knew Belarus from his own experience, Grabski argued that the Christian Orthodox population, dominant in the Minsk region, was closer to Russia, whether White or Red, than to Poland. The adoption of universal suffrage, unavoidable in a democratic state, coupled with progress in education among the peasants, would inevitably lead to the loss of the influence traditionally enjoyed in this region by the Polish minority. Given the pronounced weakness of Belarusian national sentiment among local inhabitants, a Belarusian state, though initially federated with Poland, might in the future choose to switch to Russia. Moreover, since Minsk was the main center of Orthodoxy in Belarus, and the Orthodox clergy keenly supported the idea of "all-Russian" unity, its annexation would mean the inclusion of a strong center of Russian nationalism.

While Grabski admitted there were sentimental reasons for annexing Minsk, he argued that the proper way to draw the border was to include both—regions where Polish-Catholic influences predominated and territories

necessary from the strategic security point of view. The former included Wilno and Grodno, while the latter included the Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe strategic railroad and territories west of it. Security concerns were naturally of greater significance to Poland than to Russia, which, by virtue of its vast territory and superior manpower, could not be seriously threatened by the much smaller state. Nonetheless, the inclusion of largely non-Polish territories for strategic reasons had the adverse effect of making Poland less homogeneous. Therefore, argued Grabski, it would be wrong to annex the Minsk region, since that would lower the share of Polish population in Poland to about 60 percent. The Polish state needed at least 65 percent of its citizens to be Polish; otherwise, it would either become non-Polish in character, or end up oppressing its national minorities.[26]

The federalist minority was easily persuaded of the necessity of acquiring the Soviet-held eastern part of the Wilno region, especially since it would link Poland with friendly Latvia. The government, while not particularly supportive of the idea, did not oppose it.[27] Thus, the only remaining point of disagreement was the issue of Minsk. At long last, it was decided to solve the controversy by taking a vote.

In a crucial development, General Kuliński abstained, despite having received instructions from the High Command to support the federalist solution.[28] Had Kuliński voted with the federalists, the vote would have been tied: five for, and five against. In similar situations, stalemate is usually broken by the vote of the head, meaning in this case that the federalist side would, after all, have prevailed. The consequences of so problematic a victory would have been very grave, however, considering that the side representing the "sovereign" Parliament would have been defeated by the side consisting almost exclusively of the appointees of the government and the army.

It is noteworthy that although General Kuliński's abstention contravened the High Command's instructions to support federalism, it was not an act of insubordination and, in fact, was perfectly logical. Hailing from Galicia, he was unfamiliar with Belarus and found it difficult to judge the Minsk issue on its merits.[29] As a former Austrian professional military man, he likely judged it improper for him as a representative of the army to take sides in this strictly political argument.[30] His abstention came only after the peace delegation had decided that "the Military Delegate is subordinated to the delegation head, and therefore any instruction of the High Command contrary to his instructions are not binding on him."[31] Dąbski apparently instructed Kuliński to vote as his conscience dictated. The position of the delegation head was ambiguous. Although he personally supported the federalist solution, he understood that consensus

could only be achieved on the basis of Grabski's proposal. Most importantly, in the wake of the first confidential meeting with Ioffe, Dąbski must have realized that it would be relatively easy to reach peace based on this proposal, while the federalist concept would likely be rejected by the Soviets, in spite of the Second Department's suggestions to the contrary.

In any event, the vote was won by the antifederalist side, and the federalist group loyally accepted that result. Thus, in the very north, the delegation adopted Grabski's concept of creating a corridor linking Poland with friendly Latvia and separating the Soviet state from Lithuania. Given the deep-seated Polish belief that Lithuania was a German buffer state, the Grabski corridor would physically separate Russia and Germany, the two great powers Poles saw as their main enemies. Moreover, the corridor would give to Poland the eastern part of Wilno Province which was largely Polish-inhabited, according to Polish understanding and statistical data. Having separated Lithuania from Soviet Russia, the Poles believed it would be possible for Poland somehow to regain the ethnically Polish city of Wilno, under Lithuanian rule since 26 August 1920. The desired border line ran from the Latvian border along the river Dvina to just east of Dzisna, then east of Wilejka, west of Minsk, and east of Łuniniec, Sarny, and Równe, and then along the eastern border of Galicia on the river Zbrucz to the Romanian border on the river Dniester. The strategic railroad of Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe would thus be on the Polish side (see Map 6).[32]

The Understanding of 5 October

Dąbski presented the proposed border to Ioffe in the evening of the same day, 2 October, during their second confidential meeting. He stressed that the line represented the consensus of all political parties in Poland. It must be accepted in its entirety, as he was not in a position to bargain over it. If the Soviets agreed to this border line, "the rest will go smoothly," and it would be possible to sign the preliminaries "within three to four days." The preliminaries would be based on Ioffe's draft, provided East Galicia would not be mentioned; moreover, as a concession to the Soviet side, the independence of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus would be recognized. Ioffe replied that the Polish territorial demand went beyond what he could concede according to his instructions, but he promised to relay it to Moscow.[33]

In his 3 October report to Chicherin, and to Lenin and his lieutenants, Ioffe presented his views on what he called "the Polish ultimatum." Declaring that his knowledge of the situation at the front was insufficient to judge

whether or not the proposed border should be accepted, he offered several important insights. On the one hand, he maintained, "there was a time when we proposed worse conditions"[34] than those presently demanded by Dąbski. On the other hand, their acceptance would embolden the Poles to demand greater concessions on other issues included in the peace settlement. Ioffe's general impression from his negotiations with Dąbski confirmed that "they, without a doubt, desire peace and do not want a winter campaign, just as we don't; they are even prepared to free themselves somewhat from French influence and deliver to us Wrangel and Petliura, but they still want to make good use of their favorable military situation and to acquire a peace that would be sufficiently advantageous for them." In a key assessment, Ioffe viewed the Poles' demand for the Grabski corridor as an attempt, convenient also for themselves, to make the Polish-Soviet peace treaty more palatable to France, as it "satisfied the French idée fixe of separating us from Germany."[35] Ioffe also considered that a constant factor in any negotiations with Poland was "the old Polish tragedy: lack of unity and as many policies as there are prominent statesmen." This time, however, it appeared that the territorial program as presented by Dąbski was the result of a consensus, perhaps temporary. The fact that the National Democrats had gained the upper hand in Poland meant that the peace party had won over the war party. Therefore, the proposed trip to Riga of Sapieha, a National Democrat, was seen as a factor increasing the chances of peace. Overall, Ioffe believed that "their ultimatum is not at all that categorical" and that, in case of reaching a decision to accept it, it would be the best not to reveal this at once but gradually.[36]

On 4 October, during the next confidential meeting, Ioffe applied this formula of gradual revelation, trying to gain some concessions. First, he declared he had not yet received any reply from Moscow, as the issue was still under debate. He had the impression that "the Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe railroad" would be conceded, while the Grabski corridor would not. Poland, in any case, did not need the territory and wanted it only to separate Russia from Germany, and from the West. However, should Russia agree to the Polish demand, would Poland consider granting it free commercial transit through its territory? Dąbski vaguely replied that this was likely. Further, Ioffe pointed out that the question of borders was linked to the quick signing of the peace preliminaries; yet the Poles insisted on inclusion into them of issues that were sure to cause long debates, such as the division of the Imperial Treasury and the return of Polish cultural treasures. Dąbski replied he could not back away from these demands. Ioffe proposed then that these issues be included in the preliminaries in a form that would not prejudge their final solution, which could occur later,

during negotiations over the definitive peace treaty. Dąbski's reply was evasive. Ioffe's attempt was in vain.[37]

The final confidential meeting took place on 5 October. Already the day before, Ioffe had decided to put the question point-blank: either the preliminaries were to be signed "by Thursday," 7 October, or he would depart for Moscow to get instructions.[38] At the meeting, he slightly altered the issue: either a joint public declaration that, in view of agreement on the main points, the preliminaries and the armistice would be signed shortly, or his unilateral declaration which "would in no way facilitate understanding."[39] Faced with this choice, Dąbski asked whether his border line had been accepted. Ioffe answered that it had, but on condition that: (1) the Poles agree to sign the preliminaries and the armistice on 8 October; (2) the treaty not be formulated as "an imposed ultimatum"; (3) Poland's demand for its share in the gold of the Imperial Treasury be replaced by a general formula for settling accounts; (4) Russia acquire the right to free commercial transit to Lithuania and Germany through the Grabski corridor. Having consulted with the members of his delegation, Dąbski essentially agreed to all these conditions. In the evening of the same day, Ioffe and Dąbski signed a joint statement that both sides had reached agreement on all essential questions and would sign the armistice and the preliminary peace no later than 8 October.[40]

The signing of the joint statement caused quite a commotion among journalists and diplomats alike. The British and French diplomatic representatives at Riga, for instance, immediately sent as many as twenty pages of coded wires. That night, the journalists covering the negotiations spent as much as 1.3 million Latvian rubles on telegraph services. Indeed, as Dąbski aptly put it, the joint statement "made Polish-Soviet understanding a political fact in front of the whole world; it could be neither withdrawn nor erased."[41] Chicherin, for his part, considered the understanding of 5 October to be "an actual signing of peace. After that, there remained only a whole range of technical details to work out."[42] To be sure, the signing of the armistice and the preliminary peace was now merely a matter of time.

The statement was the final nail in the coffin of the federalist concept that an influential minority in Poland, and the majority among leading circles of the army, had still hoped to realize—if only partially. The military experts with the Polish delegation, buoyed by the recent Polish victories on the battle front, were particularly surprised and disappointed. They had received clear instructions from the High Command pronouncing "most categorically" against the acceptance of the deadline of 5 October, and insisting that "the moment of the very signing of the preliminaries . . . be dependent on the opinion of the High

Command as to the situation at the front line, and on the achieved and possible successes."[43] Moreover, the High Command had planned to send the Polish delegation its proposed border line, and warned that "the future of Ukraine on this side of the Dnieper, as well as Lithuania and Belarus, can be secured in earnest only . . . in consultation with the Allies."[44] Even General Kuliński, so loyal to the delegation, was apparently shocked by the statement of 5 October, as he submitted his *votum separatum* to Dąbski on the next day.[45] According to information the Soviet delegation received from the Poles, Sapieha, who had recently become closer to Piłsudski, wanted to postpone the signing of the armistice by at least ten days. His intended trip to Riga was at the last moment prevented by Premier Witos and his deputy, Ignacy Daszyński, both of whom, together with Dąbski, were the effective leaders of the peace party.[46]

Although this information may have been given to the Soviets in an effort to make them more amenable in the final stage of negotiations, it appears it essentially reflected the truth. Indeed, while no first-hand evidence on Sapieha's reaction to the agreement is available, his later pronouncements indicate he was unhappy about the haste with which the preliminaries were to be signed. Being responsible for Polish foreign policy in its entirety, Sapieha recognized clearly the harmful consequences of France's displeasure with Dąbski's hurried approach, allowing the Soviets to move troops quickly from the Polish front against French-supported Wrangel. Moreover, he disapproved of Dąbski's confidential meetings. It is significant, however, that he did not question the territorial settlement itself.[47]

Chicherin likewise had no second thoughts about the border line. To be sure, accepting it involved sacrifice but, as he explained in a circular to his leading diplomats abroad, "the situation in the west reflects very strongly on our situation in the east, so that the reasons for concluding peace with Poland, even at the cost of some sacrifices, are very serious." In addition, there was very close interrelation between Soviet negotiations with Poland and those with Britain and Finland. The inability thus far to conclude a trade agreement with Britain, which would have softened both Poland and Finland, coupled with the unfortunate necessity to cede Petsamo to the Finns, created a situation where the acceptance of Polish territorial demands was a logical conclusion. These demands clearly indicated that Poland intended to "devour Lithuania." At the same time, France wanted to separate Russia "hermetically" from Lithuania, and thus from Germany. The Polish-Latvian corridor was devised by France, argued Chicherin, possibly in an effort to prevent reaching peace, as it probably judged this proposal to be unacceptable to Russia. Thus, Soviet acceptance of the corridor likely thwarted this French scheme, he concluded mistakenly,

though the Bolsheviks must be prepared for yet other French and Polish attempts at preventing peace.[48]

General Żeligowski's Capture of Wilno

As a result of the Battle of the Niemen, the victorious Polish Army captured the territory just south of Wilno and its environs. As the Soviets had turned over the city to Lithuania on 26 August, the Poles now faced a major dilemma of how to recover it. Declaring war on Lithuania was not an option, considering that Poland had renounced Wilno in the Spa agreement with the Allies. Yet, Piłsudski, while being quite conciliatory toward Lithuania, vowed that the Poles "will defend most vigorously their co-nationals in the regions of Wilno and Grodno."[49] On 30 September, he suggested to General Lucjan Żeligowski, a native of the Wilno region, that the only way to "rescue" it would be for him to lead against the city a unit of volunteers from among Polish soldiers hailing from the region. Then, the inhabitants would surely rise up against the Lithuanian garrison.

General Żeligowski agreed to this undertaking, insisting that, to ensure its success, the entire Lithuanian-Belarusian Division march on Wilno along with a volunteer unit. In addition, two Polish armies were to secure the undertaking on both sides.[50] On Żeligowski's left flank, the army under General Sikorski took the crucial railroad junction at Orany on 3 October, thus making it impossible for the Lithuanians to transfer their troops quickly to Wilno from north of Suwałki, where the bulk of the Lithuanian Army was deployed. Polish possession of Orany was recognized by the agreement on the Polish-Lithuanian demarcation line, signed in Suwałki on 7 October.[51] The next morning, on Żeligowski's right flank, the army under General Śmigły-Rydz began its 120-kilometer march on Święciany, northeast of Wilno. Also on the morning of 8 October, General Żeligowski himself marched off to Wilno, meeting some opposition south of the city.[52] Lithuanian troops, however, were forced to evacuate it on the next day because of an uprising on the part of the Polish inhabitants. As a result, General Żeligowski's troops made a peaceful entry on 9 October, greeted enthusiastically by the local Poles.[53] The whole operation was undertaken, ostensibly, without the knowledge and approval of the Polish state.

Three days later, the general proclaimed the immediate Wilno region a separate state, to be called Central Lithuania. This very name suggested an attempt not only to "rescue" Wilno for Poland, but also "to reestablish historic Lithuania."[54] Indeed, Piłsudski intended to reestablish it as a state containing three autonomous "cantons": one Polish-dominated, with Wilno; one Lithuanian-dominated, with Kaunas; and one Belarusian-dominated, with Minsk. In

any case, the territory of Central Lithuania, including Wilno, Troki, Oszmiana, and Święciany, covered about ten thousand square kilometers and was inhabited by some 530,000 people. It was ruled by the Provisional Governing Commission, appointed by General Żeligowski, while he himself took the post of Supreme Commander of its armed forces. The commission was dominated by those local Polish politicians who supported the idea of federalism. It also included two members of the Belarusian Supreme Rada.[55]

The Final Polish Offensive

On 9 October, Polish troops began their final offensive in the Northwestland. Although commanders on both sides already knew of the signing in Riga of the understanding of 5 October,[56] they urged their soldiers to redouble their efforts. Apparently, they felt that the border could still be revised to take into account the most recent changes on the battlefield. Thus, General Śmigły-Rydz wrote in his order to his army: "We are in the final stage of the war, and therefore the greatest effort is required from the troops. Marching one kilometer [forward] means expanding our Fatherland's borders by one kilometer." Supreme Commander Kamenev, on the other hand, tried to impress on Tukhachevskii that although the border had been "drawn west of your present position, this can easily be changed, if during those last days you lose territory."[57]

Yet, only Polish troops responded to these exhortations, making daily up to sixty kilometers. Mołodeczno was taken on 12 October, the day when the preliminary peace was finally signed. The fighting continued after the signing, however, and Wilejka was captured on the next day. The Poles did not stop until they took Minsk on 15 October, greeted enthusiastically by the inhabitants, including Jews. Soon, however, they had to withdraw to the border line west of the city, as the armistice began officially on the night of 18–19 October.[58]

In the Southwestland, the Polish Army, having learned of the understanding of 5 October, did its best to move as far as possible beyond the new border in order to create an extensive bridgehead for Petliura's troops, who intended to continue fighting the Bolsheviks on their own. Petliura also ordered his forces to press eastward as hard as they could. As a result of this cooperation, in the very south, where his troops operated, the front line lay about 130 kilometers east of the border river Zbrucz, when the armistice was implemented on 18–19 October.[59]

While the Poles had thus won decisively the last campaign of the war, it would be inaccurate to say that they succeeded in destroying either the Western or the Southwestern fronts. Though severely mauled, both of these fronts were still operative. The Western Front was quickly withdrawing east, and

Polish forces could not chase it beyond the Northwestland, for both political and military reasons. Poland had no claim to any part of Russia proper, and Polish public opinion would have been against such an adventure. At the same time, the Polish Army was not prepared to carry out operations on a very long front in Russia proper against a determined opponent. A forced withdrawal from the Northwestland would surely not induce Moscow to capitulate, considering the Soviets had already survived worse situations.

At the same time, to prepare another major offensive in the Southwestland would have taken at least four weeks, since the majority of Polish forces was now concentrated in the Northwestland. The operation could thus begin no earlier than November and would not be finished before the onset of winter. The war would then be renewed in the spring of 1921 and drag on for another year. Such a prospect was politically unacceptable, as the Poles had already become tired of war. Moreover, the Bolsheviks would certainly use the winter lull to reinforce and reorganize their troops in preparation for the spring campaign.[60]

Soviet Russia's military potential was, of course, much greater than that of Poland. Being a country of enormous size and large population, it could afford to lose an entire campaign, while Poland might not survive the loss of a major battle, as the events on the Vistula suggested.[61] Soviet Russia had a significant war industry, and the Red Army counted 5 million men in the fall of 1920.[62] By contrast, the Polish Army reached 1 million at the time,[63] while Poland produced neither weapons nor military equipment, having to buy both mainly in France; and France would not support any new Polish offensives. Another march on Kiev would certainly have caused an even stronger backlash in the West against Poland's "imperialism" than that of May 1920.[64] Overall, from a military point of view, reaching a favorable, if not necessarily a victor's peace with Soviet Russia was a very sensible solution under the circumstances.

From the Bolshevik point of view, military considerations also dictated offering Poland a favorable peace. Having suffered, in Lenin's words, "a catastrophic defeat" at the gates of Warsaw, resulting in the loss of over 100,000 of its best troops, followed by a sound defeat in the Battle of the Niemen, the Red Army was no longer fit for offensive operations on the Polish front. The campaign of 1920 had been lost. The Red Army had proved clearly unequal to the task of spreading revolution to Poland and the rest of Europe. Preparing a major offensive for the next year would be extremely difficult, resulting surely, as Chicherin pointed out, in numerous "hunger revolts" all over Soviet Russia. Although the Red Army was 5 million strong, much of it was unsuited for battle, especially the troops in the rear, whose main task was to keep in check the Soviet population.[65]

Lenin, of course, realized all these difficulties in the aftermath of "the complete failure" and "the first defeat" of the Red Army, as he put it. At the same time, he would not have accepted a humiliating peace, as he still vowed to "smash [the Versailles settlement] at the first opportunity," and "to finish all of them off for good." A peace with Poland must thus give Soviet Russia a proper territorial basis in the Borderlands for future expansion and the export of revolution. All in all, a compromise peace ceding to Poland the western part of the Borderlands would be a suitable way out of this very difficult and disappointing situation.[66]

The Drafting of the Preliminary Peace Treaty and the Armistice

In the wake of the understanding of 5 October, the Bolsheviks fully expected France to undertake measures to prevent the peace.[67] Chicherin's suspiciousness and nervousness, always considerable, began to border on the extreme. He feared that perhaps "tomorrow morning France or the National Democrats, or, on the other hand, the Belvedere [that is, the Chief of State] will invent something new to break off peace."[68] He urged Ioffe to "collect material so that in case the Poles refuse to sign, it will be possible to unmask them and demoralize them by agitation."[69]

Given this state of mind, it is easy to explain why the Soviets insisted on the quickest possible signing of the armistice and the preliminary peace. This was not an easy task, however, since the Polish delegation wanted to include a number of issues other than the border line, figuring that as long as the front was rolling east, the Soviet would be more amenable. The Poles reasoned that, once the issues had been included and publicized, the Soviets would have to honor their obligations, even after the end of hostilities. Precisely for that reason, the Soviet delegation tried their best to keep these points out of the preliminaries, or to formulate them in very general language, allowing a variety of interpretations. The battle was fought in several mixed commissions, including especially the financial-economic one, led by Grabski and Obolenskii, and the military one, headed by General Kuliński and Kirov.[70]

The most contentious issue was the Polish share of the former Imperial State Bank's gold reserves. The Poles argued that this should be proportional to the share of revenue collected by the empire from the territory now being formally ceded to Poland. In addition, the Polish state would assume a proportionate share of all outstanding Russian state loans. Based on these assumptions, and considering that Congress Poland had been the most developed and most

densely populated part of the empire, the Polish delegation claimed their fair share of Russian gold reserves to be 296 million rubles.[71]

The Soviets were astonished by this "unbelievable" demand, Ioffe having expected the Poles to demand 30 million rubles, an amount he had already deemed too high.[72] On 8 October, he declared gravely that severance of negotiations was "unavoidable," and leaked the Polish demand to the press. "At the last moment," the Poles asked for a "private" meeting at which they agreed to withdraw their demand in exchange for a formula stating that "the mutual settling of accounts in the definitive treaty will take into account Poland's active role in the economic life of the former Russian Empire [and] in the creation of the former State Bank's gold reserves." The next day, they demanded an advance of 50 million rubles and timber concessions. The Soviets would not agree to make an advance of more than 10 million rubles, but they did agree to mention timber concessions in a secret protocol attached to the preliminaries. In the end, the Poles refused to accept an advance of 10 million, considering the amount to be "pitiful."[73]

The other contentious issue related to the terms of the armistice. The Poles argued that "the cessation of hostilities ought to begin six days[74] after the signing, and the armistice should be denounceable at forty-eight hours' notice." The Soviets rejected these terms "categorically," insisting on cessation of hostilities four days after signing,[75] with much longer notice of termination of the armistice. They were understandably determined to prevent Polish troops—which had already reached east of the agreed-upon border—from advancing still farther. Moreover, the Bolsheviks intended to transfer their troops as quickly as possible from the Polish to the Wrangel front, and needed ample warning of a Polish renewal of hostilities. Since neither side was willing to concede the issue, "the situation became aggravated almost to the point of severance" of negotiations, as Ioffe put it.[76]

To break the stalemate, he tried to convince the suspicious Chicherin that democratic Poland, having signed the peace, would be unable to renew hostilities. Ioffe argued that "actually, there is no such danger whatsoever, and we can easily take away from the front line even our last soldier." Indeed, he assured, the Poles "fear severance [of negotiations] even more than we do." Ioffe also tried to impress on Chicherin that the Polish terms were precipitated by the fear that in Moscow "the war party may win at any moment," prompting the Soviets to use the armistice to defeat Wrangel quickly and then turn with all their might against Poland. The Poles pointed out, as Ioffe put it, that "we ourselves have said that on our side there is a very substantial minority" against a compromise peace with Poland.[77] Rather than battling against these terms,

he argued, the best "countermeasure" would be to ensure that Polish troops withdrew from the front line to the border line "immediately after ratification of the preliminary rather than the definitive peace. Then, we have nothing to fear."[78] In the end, Chicherin agreed with Ioffe and the Soviets largely accepted the Polish terms of armistice in exchange for the Polish troops' early withdrawal from the front line to the border line.

The final point of friction was the Polish request to establish a two-month deadline for definitive peace. Ioffe opposed any sort of deadline on the grounds that it might become an additional source of conflict. In the end, no deadline was adopted.[79]

As a result of all these quarrels, it was impossible to sign the preliminaries and the armistice on 8 October, even though the two delegations negotiated "day and night," as Ioffe put it.[80] In addition, there were purely technical difficulties. The precise definition of the long border line, for instance, required several days' work. Moreover, members of the Russian-Ukrainian delegation, unfamiliar with the Ukrainian literary language, had difficulty preparing the requisite Ukrainian text of the preliminaries.[81]

There is also no doubt that the Poles purposely delayed the signing for reasons of their own. The Polish civilian experts, fearing that the breakneck tempo of work in the mixed commissions could be detrimental to its quality, wrote as many as two group letters to Dąbski, drawing his attention to the "impossibility of work" under these conditions and to the "harmful effects of haste." The Polish military experts, on the other hand—having received orders from the High Command to delay for three days more the signing of the armistice—organized a delaying action into which they managed to draw two secretaries as well as some technical personnel and experts.[82] As a result, Ioffe blamed the delays in the mixed commissions on "the Poles' urge to talk."[83]

Moreover, during the last two or even three days preceding the signing, there were no direct wire communications between Moscow and the Soviet delegation at Riga. Chicherin was furious and blamed it on Latvian secret services, acting on behalf of their Polish counterparts.[84] These delaying actions had two main goals in sight. In Ukraine, Polish military circles wanted to give Petliura's forces more time to prepare for their separate fight against the Soviets. At the same time, Polish troops were striving to reach the line of Zhitomir—Berdichev before the cessation of hostilities, since by merely staying along this line they could effectively cover Petliura's left flank.[85] In Belarus, the delays aimed at giving Polish troops enough time to capture Minsk before the cessation of hostilities. Piłsudski intended to establish a Belarusian government there in an effort to set up the missing Belarusian "canton," to be linked with Central Lithuania

and Lithuania proper. He expected optimistically that: (1) the armistice line would run along the front line; (2) Polish troops would remain on the armistice line until the definitive peace treaty was ratified; and (3) a neutral zone would be created by Soviet troops withdrawing on the Dnieper.[86] It appears that the Polish delegation tried hard to secure Soviet agreement to the first two points. Ioffe, however, insisted adamantly that Polish troops withdraw to the border line "immediately after ratification of the preliminary rather than the definitive peace."[87] Stalemate ensued. "At the last moment," the Poles reluctantly agreed to Ioffe's condition,[88] while the Soviets largely accepted the remaining Polish terms of armistice.

The Polish delegation's willingness to find a middle ground on all these issues resulted from several factors. First, having been conceded the requested border, the Poles did not want to jeopardize it by being uncompromising on other, less important issues. Second, Dąbski and the antifederalist delegates apparently feared that Polish troops' staying on the front line until the definitive peace would give Piłsudski a chance to revive his federalist concept, thus endangering Polish-Soviet peace. It seems that their agreement to a Polish withdrawal from Minsk to the border line at the cessation of hostilities was designed precisely to avoid this danger. Finally, trying to find a middle ground on any issue was consistent with their goal of reaching a genuine compromise peace. This was duly noted by Ioffe who reported to Chicherin that the Poles "want us to admit that this peace is based on understanding rather than coercion." He refused to comply with the Polish request, however, perceiving shrewdly that "their fear of our declaring this to be an imperialist peace gives us a trump card for our propaganda, now and in the future."[89]

Apparently, Sapieha did not share this fear. Upon learning the final terms of peace on 10 October,[90] he admonished Dąbski for not having demanded that the Soviets turn over "part of their arms and ammunition." After all, the Soviet situation at Riga was analogous to the Polish situation at Minsk, he argued. The preliminaries were rather flawed; for example, an opportunity was wasted to get a "maximum" share of the gold reserves. The chief of Polish diplomacy warned further that France was displeased with the absence of a clause preventing the Soviets from moving troops from the Polish to the Wrangel front. Above all, Paris would consider Polish "haste" in signing the preliminaries to be an act of "disloyalty."[91]

These belated admonitions notwithstanding, the final draft of the preliminary peace and the armistice was at last completed on 11 October. In the morning of the next day, Dąbski received two wires from Warsaw. Sapieha pointed out that it would be inappropriate to sign the treaty without consulting

the Allies about the precise wording of the final draft. Therefore, he urged Dąbski still to delay the signing. Otherwise, the signed treaty would merely be a temporary solution, since a durable and lasting peace could only be reached with the cooperation of the Entente.[92] Witos, on the other hand, while admitting that the treaty was not without "certain flaws," urged him, "sign! . . . Your peace is very good."[93]

The Terms of the Preliminary Peace and the Armistice

The preliminary peace and the armistice were signed on 12 October, at 7:30 P.M.,[94] in the spacious White Chamber of the Hall of the Blackheads. The signing ceremony was attended by as many as two hundred people, including the entire diplomatic corps accredited in Riga, prominent Latvian officials, and journalists. Great crowds gathered in the square surrounding the hall. The act of signing was preceded by a general exchange of felicitations, with the heads of the respective delegations thanking each other and the Latvians for the courtesies extended.[95] In his speech, Ioffe declared that the preliminaries were a good foundation for reaching a definitive peace which would be "durable, honorable and based on mutual understanding." Dąbski, in turn, stressed that in the Riga negotiations the Poles had tried to achieve "a compromise peace" whereby vital interests of both sides would be satisfied and there would be "no victors and no vanquished."[96] The preliminary peace, being undoubtedly based on these principles, gives "a guarantee of durability," he insisted.[97]

According to the terms of the preliminaries, Poland recognized the independence of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus based on the principle of national self-determination. The border line, defined as one "between Poland on the one side and Ukraine and Belarus on the other," was drawn along the Dąbski line. It created a corridor between Lithuania and the Soviet state linking Poland with Latvia, left on the Polish side the strategic railroad Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe, and recognized all of East Galicia as Polish (see Map 6). An important clause stipulated that insofar as west of this border there were territories contested by Poland and Lithuania, the issue was to be solved exclusively between those parties.

Poland and the Soviet state[98] vowed mutually to respect their sovereignty and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs. They also promised to include in the definitive peace treaty an obligation not to support organizations aimed at armed struggle against the other side, or at subverting its political

or social order. From the moment of exchange of ratification documents, Poland and the Soviet state were mutually obliged not to support hostilities conducted by third parties against the other side.

With the signing of the preliminaries, mixed commissions were to be created to ensure (1) the immediate release of hostages;[99] (2) the immediate exchange of civilian prisoners, internees, and, if possible, prisoners of war; and (3) the return of exiles, refugees, and emigrants. A special agreement on these issues was to be concluded without delay.

Immediately after the signing, special ordinances were to be issued, suspending all kinds of legal action against, and stopping execution of any punishment in regard to civilian prisoners, internees, hostages, exiles, emigrants, and prisoners of war. These people had the right to refuse to return home, and their home authorities had the right not to accept them.

Most of the remaining articles listed the issues to be dealt with by the definitive peace treaty. The most important among them was Article X. It stipulated, among other things, that the definitive treaty provide for (1) taking into account Poland's active participation in the economic life of the former Russian Empire; (2) mutual reevacuation and return of the movable property—belonging to the state, cooperatives, institutions, individuals, and corporate bodies—taken away or evacuated since 1 August 1914;[100] (3) the return of archives, libraries, works of art, relics of the past, etc., taken away from Poland to Russia since the partitions of Poland; (4) settlement of claims by private people and corporate bodies of each side against the government and institutions of the other side; and (5) the Soviet state's granting Poland and its citizens far-reaching concessions in regard to both restitution of property and indemnities for losses suffered during the Revolution and Civil War in Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, the definitive treaty was to give transit rights mutually to both parties.

The preliminary peace was to be ratified no later than fifteen days after signing. The exchange of ratification documents was to take place in Liepaja, a port town in western Latvia,[101] no later than twenty-one days after signing; that is, by 2 November. The preliminaries were legally binding from the moment of exchange of ratification documents.[102]

A secret additional protocol was meant as a detailed explanation of Articles X to XII of the preliminaries. It declared that the active participation of Poland in the economic life of the former Russian Empire included its participation in the creation of the Imperial State Bank's gold reserves. On account of its monetary obligations to Poland, the Soviet state would make an advance consisting of gold, raw materials, and timber concessions in state-owned forests conveniently placed near the Polish border. The amount of the advance was to be determined

by a special mixed commission created within a month from the exchange of ratification documents.

In addition, the Soviet state was to return to Poland, or indemnify it for, the property, whether owned by the state, individuals, or corporate bodies, confiscated by the Soviet authorities when they occupied the premises of Polish agencies in Soviet territory. Finally, the protocol declared that goods transported through Poland to the Soviet state, and vice versa, would not be subject to any special transit duties. Poland, however, was free to regulate transit conditions for goods originating from Germany and Austria.[103]

Attached to the preliminaries was the armistice agreement. The cessation of hostilities was to take place six days after the signing; that is, at midnight on the night of 18–19 October. The armistice line followed the front line south of Nieśwież, that is, in the middle and south sectors. In the north sector, the armistice line ran along the border line, meaning that Polish troops had to withdraw from Minsk before the cessation of hostilities. The neutral zone in that sector was to be created by the Soviet troops withdrawing fifteen kilometers to the east of the armistice line. After the exchange of ratification documents, Polish and Soviet troops in the middle and south sectors would take positions alongside the border,[104] yet no closer than fifteen kilometers from it. Thus, a thirty-kilometer neutral zone would be created. A special mixed military armistice commission was to be created and charged with implementing the armistice agreement.

The armistice was concluded for twenty-one days; during that period it was denounceable at forty-eight hours' notice. Afterwards, the truce would be automatically extended until the ratification of a definitive peace treaty; then, it would be denounceable at fourteen days' notice.[105]

Overall, the preliminary peace was a result of compromise. The list of Soviet gains begins with Polish submission to the "ten-day ultimatum." Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus were recognized as independent republics. The threat of Petliura to Soviet Ukraine and that of anti-Bolshevik resistance in Soviet Belarus was minimized. The Bolsheviks gained a free hand to finish off Wrangel immediately, and to strengthen their position in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Poles, on the other hand, received Soviet recognition of the Dąbski line, giving Poland substantial territories east of the Curzon line drawn by the Entente. The Polish-Latvian corridor and the strategic railroad Baranowicze—Łuniniec—Sarny—Równe were especially important to the Poles. Moreover, Russia gave Poland a free hand in its dealings with Lithuania. Furthermore, Poland was to receive some gold, retrieve its alienated cultural treasures and get back its evacuated population and property.

It is fair to say that the Polish delegation saw the territorial terms of the peace agreement as based on compromise. They abstained from trying to draw out negotiations significantly, although they realized that delaying would have given the Polish Army the time necessary to advance still farther to the east, which might have forced the Soviets to offer better territorial terms.[106] Moreover, the Polish delegation decided not to make any effort to acquire Minsk. Dąbski, acting on behalf of its majority, did not press for maximum territorial concessions as these might revive the policy of federalism which was opposed by most Poles, particularly at this time,[107] and was totally unacceptable to the Soviets.

The compromise nature of the preliminary peace, especially in respect to territorial and ethnic issues, was likewise obvious to the Soviets. Speaking at the VTsIK's extraordinary session of 23 October, Chicherin summarized the preliminaries as "a compromise" in which Poland received "territorial concessions" for its renunciation of "the policy of bufferism" or federalism.[108] This interpretation is confirmed by his personal notes, written soon after the signing, pointing out that the guiding idea of the VTsIK declaration was exactly this exchange. The most crucial aspect of "our compromise with Poland," as he put it, was the trading of the Polish–Latvian corridor for Soviet Ukraine and "half of Belarus." At the bottom of the page outlining the entire course of negotiations at Riga, Chicherin wrote his telling summary: "This is a compromise."[109]

Nonterritorial issues were also solved on the basis of compromise. Thus, the idea of Soviet financial obligations to Poland was accepted in principle, while the amount specifically demanded was decisively rejected by the Soviets. In a similar manner, the armistice was construed according largely to Polish wishes, with the caveat that Polish troops were to withdraw to the border line soon after the preliminary peace—which was an essential condition from the Soviet point of view.

It is noteworthy that by agreeing to the latter clause, the Polish delegation gave away an effective means of pressuring the Soviets to fulfill their obligations under the treaty. It was an important and controversial concession,[110] considering that the preliminary peace was rather asymmetric, as the Soviet state was obliged to take various unilateral actions (for example, to release hostages, return evacuated property and population, release the Polish share of gold reserves, and return Polish cultural treasures), and Poland could not effectively use the threat of retaliation.

The compromise character of the preliminaries was also clear to many neutral observers. Thus, the Associated Press quoted with approval Ioffe's characterization of the preliminary peace as "a peace without victory and without vanquished"; it further argued that the quotation described the Riga

agreement "accurately, as it appeared to disinterested onlookers. It was a peace of give and take" and "undoubtedly a triumph for the two chairmen who made it."[111] At the same time, however, some observers, including the world-renowned *Times* of London, viewed it as "a victor's peace" whereby "the Polish leaders have certainly . . . extended their sway beyond territory mainly inhabited by Poles."[112] A contrary view was held by ethnically Polish natives of territories east of the border, many of them aristocratic landowners, well educated and articulate. To them, the Riga territorial settlement amounted to Poland's "fourth partition"; it was a "shame" and "betrayal."[113] Similarly strong sentiments against the agreement were voiced for completely different reasons by some of the more hawkish Bolsheviks. Bukharin, for example, condemned it as "shameful."[114]

In any case, having signed this compromise peace agreement on 12 October, both sides turned their attention to ratifying it. As Witos wrote to Dąbski, "we must ratify the treaty as quickly as possible so that [the issue of] peace will belong to the past."[115] Chicherin expressed a similar view.[116] However, the Bolshevik leadership was rather unwilling to call another extraordinary plenary session of the VTsIK in order to ratify it.[117] Their unwillingness may have resulted from fear that the preliminaries, like the previous VTsIK declaration, might attract criticism from the war party. In any event, the Politburo created a special commission consisting of Chicherin, Petr Stuchka, and A. S. Enukidze "to study carefully from the legal point of view whether it would be sufficient to ratify the Polish peace by the SNK [Council of People's Commissars] and the Presidium of the VTsIK."[118]

The commission's answer to this question was apparently negative,[119] for an extraordinary plenary session of the VTsIK did take place on 23 October. In his opening remarks, Chicherin described the preliminary peace as "a compromise" whereby Soviet territorial concessions were exchanged for Polish renunciation of federalism. The session was likely preceded by intense arm-twisting to ensure smooth ratification, since the debate was unusually short and tame.[120] Some slight reservations were raised, however. For instance, Radek pointed out that, according to Wasilewski's recent press interview, Petliura would continue fighting against the Bolsheviks. Żeligowski had also stated in a press interview that he supported the federalist policy of Piłsudski. "Only at the price of painful concessions have we received a piece of paper which we are not sure will have any meaning tomorrow," argued Radek. Thus, the Bolsheviks were uncertain whether Poland would honor the signed compromise. Radek indicated also that they themselves meant this compromise to be merely temporary. Indeed, the territorial settlement would change once

"Polish workers liberate themselves," which "will happen soon," although it would be impolitic "to hint that we intend resorting to arms to speed up the matter." Overall, "for the time being, we can accept this peace" with all these caveats, he argued. No one opposed his views, and the VTsIK ratified the preliminary peace by acclamation.[121]

The Polish Parliament had debated the preliminaries a day earlier. The opening presentation was made by a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He emphasized the moderation of the Polish side, which aimed not at concluding a victor's peace but rather at solving "the centuries-old Polish-Russian quarrel" in a manner based on understanding. The debate that followed showed that members of all political parties in Poland agreed with this assessment. As a Socialist M.P. put it, the preliminary peace was "not of the sort of the Brest-Litovsk or the Versailles peace," even though the new Polish-Soviet border did "cut through Belarus." Most speakers agreed, however, that "Belarus proper" remained on the Soviet side, as it was associated with "Minsk, Mogilev, Polotsk, and Vitebsk" rather than with "Grodno, Wilno, and Białystok." In any case, the population west of the border "has always gravitated toward Poland through its culture and civilization." While no one opposed the latter statement, some members pointed out that a "considerable part of Polish population" remained on the other side of the border. Overall, as the down-to-earth member of a Jewish party put it, the border was drawn "strictly according to National Democratic ideas"; the federalist alternative was, simply put, impractical. As for the remaining part of the preliminaries, it was filled largely with "generalities that will have to be precisely defined in the definitive treaty." On this note, the Parliament ratified the preliminary peace by acclamation.[122]

The ratification documents were duly exchanged in Liepaja on 2 November. Thus, the preliminary peace became legally binding. The Soviet-Polish war was finally over.

After a two-day critical break in negotiations, risked by Dąbski to soften the Bolsheviks, he judged the time ripe to offer Ioffe a confidential meeting. It confirmed that, after all, the Soviets were indeed prepared to offer Poland substantial territorial concessions in exchange for its renunciation of federalism. This called for reconciling the differences within the Polish delegation, and hammering out a common platform. After much debate, a vote was taken which the antifederalist faction, led by Grabski, won by the slightest margin. The federalist minority accepted that result, along with the border proposal promoted by the antifederalists. A consensus was thus reached on the need to demand West Volhynia in the south, the Polish-Latvian corridor in the north, and western

Belarus in the center. At the same time, the delegation decided not to make an effort to acquire Minsk, the capital city of Belarus.

The Polish border demand, hammered out with so much difficulty, was not negotiable, as it might have been impossible for the Poles to find a new consensus based on another line. Moreover, Polish troops had already reached the demanded border line in the south and middle sectors of the front, and were still continuing their movement eastward.

Moscow accepted this border demand on 5 October. It appears that the demanded line coincided with the maximum territorial concessions that the Bolsheviks were prepared to give Poland. It is most unlikely that a demand for Minsk would have been accepted, as Lenin, Chicherin, and Ioffe were all very determined to prevent a revival of Polish federalism. In any event, a Polish-Soviet understanding was formally signed on the same day.

Now, with the border issue out of the way, the remaining questions needed to be resolved. The two most contentious issues were the Polish share of the former Imperial State Bank's gold reserves, and the terms of armistice. After some very hard bargaining, both sides agreed to compromise. The Soviets recognized the Polish title to some part of the gold reserves, but firmly rejected the amount requested. Moreover, they largely accepted the Polish-proposed terms of armistice, while obliging the Poles to withdraw their troops from the front line to the border line soon after ratification of the preliminary, rather than the definitive, peace.

It is not unlikely that, on these issues, the Polish delegation might have received somewhat better terms. That this did not happen was due to several factors. First, unlike the Soviets, the Poles did not show sufficient unity of purpose. Dąbski had no incentive to fight tooth and nail for the terms requested by the High Command, while Piłsudski still tried to pursue the federalist concept, thus undermining the very basis of Polish-Soviet agreement. Moreover, Dąbski lacked proper and authoritative guidance from Warsaw, as Sapieha's instructions were sometimes contradicted by those from Witos, and the initial instructions had been issued by the State Defense Council. Second, Ioffe, an excellent tactical negotiator, had a huge advantage over Dąbski when dealing with a maze of difficult and often interconnected issues. Finally, the Polish delegation, having received the desired border line, did not want to lose it over other, less important issues.

The preliminaries were signed on 12 October 1920. They essentially consisted of the delineation of the Polish-Soviet border line, the listing of all the issues to be dealt with by the definitive peace, and some basic guidelines on how to solve them. Many of these issues involved unilateral Soviet obligations

to Poland. By listing them in the preliminaries, the Poles hoped to prevent the Soviets from reneging. Yet, having agreed to withdraw their troops quickly to the border line, the Poles bargained away the only effective means of pressure to fulfill these obligations.

All in all, the preliminary peace was a result of compromise, whereby Polish renunciation of federalism was exchanged for Soviet territorial concessions. There was, however, an important difference in interpretation: while the Poles characterized this compromise as "eternal," the Soviets meant it to be temporary. Nonetheless, the preliminary peace effectively ended the nearly two-year-old Polish-Soviet war. Each side ratified it by acclamation, as both Poland and the Soviet state considered it an overall good basis for reaching a definitive peace.

CHAPTER VII

Definitive Peace Negotiations: Difficulties

The Final Defeat of Poland's Ukrainian and Belarusian Allies

Only a couple of hours after the signing of the preliminaries on 12 October 1920, the Soviets received intelligence from Poland that Piłsudski was "extremely unhappy about the signed peace." Subsequent intelligence reports indicated that, as commander in chief, he sharply reproached General Kuliński, the member of the peace delegation at Riga representing the army, for "pliancy and haste." The Polish leader could not reconcile himself to the signed preliminaries, and vowed that "under no circumstance will he abandon Petliura." While the Soviets took this intelligence with all seriousness, they nonetheless believed that the support of all Polish political parties for the peace would prevent him from undertaking "military adventures." Indeed, although military circles in Poland expected the peace to be short-lived, assuming that the Bolsheviks were bent on breaking it,[1] nothing indicates that Piłsudski did not intend to keep the letter, if not the spirit, of the preliminaries. In particular, the preliminary peace specifically allowed support of "third party hostilities against the other side" until the exchange of ratification documents.[2]

In early September 1920, it had already been agreed between the Poles and Petliura's Ukrainians that if a Polish-Soviet peace were concluded, his troops would not be disarmed, but instead given an opportunity to fight on their own in Soviet Ukraine. In late September, the Polish government granted Petliura's troops significant material assistance in preparation for the approaching campaign. The Poles were determined "to support this whole undertaking most

strenuously." The new minister of war, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, argued that such assistance was required under the Polish-Ukrainian military convention of 24 April 1920, and that, even after the conclusion of a peace treaty, a strong "Ukrainian army on our flank could always keep [the Bolsheviks] in check and thus strengthen our military position."[3]

On the eve of the signing of the preliminaries, Sapieha instructed his diplomats that despite having reached agreement with the Soviets, "we have no reason to trust our opponents' good will; rather we treat their concessions as the fruit of our victories and a symptom of their internal weakness. It is therefore necessary to continue supporting elements hostile to Soviet Russia, whether Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, or Caucasian," as a means of warding off Soviet danger. Since the Poles did not believe "in the durability of the Bolshevik system in Russia," they thought it necessary to maintain relations with all those Russian organizations that could possibly come to power in the near future. Moreover, Warsaw did not want to seem indifferent to the fate of that part of the historic *Rzeczpospolita* that had been separated from Poland by the new border. The Poles intended "to support Ukrainian and Belarusian independence, stressing our sympathy toward these nations and the contradiction between the fundamental Soviet declaration recognizing their independence, and [Moscow's] conduct, imposing Soviet supremacy on these countries." In particular, Warsaw would maintain "friendly" relations with the government of Petliura, keeping in mind the possibility of further cooperation in the future. This plan of action was, strictly speaking, within the letter of the preliminaries, as they declared that only in the definitive treaty would Poland and the Soviet state oblige themselves not to create or support "organizations aiming at armed struggle against the other side, aiming at subverting the political or social system of the other side, making an attempt against its territorial integrity, and claiming to be a government of the other side."[4]

In accordance with these guidelines, set by Poland's civilian and military leadership, Petliura's troops received in October and early November large amounts of arms and equipment, as well as food and forage.[5] Bolshevik prisoners of war captured by the Poles were allowed to volunteer to join Petliura's army. Moreover, the Poles tried to facilitate agreement between Petliura and Wrangel on the basis of Ukraine's "fairly broad" autonomy within a restored "Great Russia."[6] Although Wrangel was wary of expressly accepting such a proposal, the two sides agreed nonetheless on military cooperation; thus, Petliura's troops were joined by the so-called Russian 3rd Army, newly formed out of volunteers from among Bolshevik prisoners of war in Polish hands, and led by White Russian General Boris Peremykin.[7]

At the same time, in view of their obligations assumed by the signing of the preliminaries, the Poles asked Petliura's troops to leave the Polish side of the newly established border by 2 November, the anticipated date of exchanging ratification documents. This could be done fairly easily, since the front line on the Polish southernmost flank, held by his troops, ran over a hundred kilometers east of the border. In case of their crossing onto the western side of the border, however, they would be disarmed and interned.[8]

Although, strictly speaking, the armistice agreement did not cover Petliura's army, in practice fighting stopped also in its sector of the front line.[9] Both sides used this break to prepare for a final battle. Petliura, who commanded nearly forty thousand men,[10] planned to begin his offensive on 11 November. The Bolsheviks, however, surprised him by attacking a day earlier. The Ukrainians were unable to withstand the attack, and their withdrawal turned into a rout. The remnants of Petliura's army crossed the border on the river Zbrucz on 21 November. Overall, around twenty thousand men were disarmed and interned by the Poles.[11]

In parallel to Petliura's efforts in Ukraine, a similar military enterprise was led in Belarus by General Stanislav Bulak-Balakhovich. He hailed from the Wilno region and was of Polish-Belarusian stock, although his national affiliation remained unclear.[12] His troops, in any case, consisted mostly of Russians and other East Slavs. They had been fighting against the Soviets, together with the Polish Army, as an independent allied force since early 1920.[13] In the summer of that year, they had been subordinated to the Russian Political Committee, formed at that time in Warsaw by Boris V. Savinkov, a noted Russian Socialist-Revolutionary. Once the preliminary peace was signed at Riga, the Polish High Command gave Balakhovich and Savinkov a choice between being disarmed and continuing fighting the Bolsheviks on their own, east of the new Polish-Soviet border. They chose the latter.[14] Accordingly, the Poles armed, equipped, and supplied Balakhovich's troops, asking them to leave Polish territory by 2 November.

While crossing the Polish-Soviet border, Balakhovich's forces, officially known as the Russian People's Volunteer Army, consisted of about seventeen thousand men. The whole affair promised to be just another White Russian crusade against the Bolsheviks. Yet, on 6 November, Balakhovich surprised his Russian brothers in arms by solemnly declaring the establishment of the Belarusian Republic. Having taken Mozyr', he proclaimed himself Chief of the Belarusian State, and named its government on 16 November. Soon, however, the Red Army forced his troops to begin a hasty withdrawal toward the Polish border. By 30 November, around sixty-five hundred of them found salvation on Polish territory, where they were promptly disarmed and interned.[15]

At about the same time, the Poles also supported an attempt at creating a semblance of Belarusian self-rule in Slutsk. This town was retaken by Polish troops on 11 October but found itself east of the new border. The Poles let local Belarusian activists take over civil administration of Slutsk County. The Belarusian National Committee, subordinated to the Belarusian Supreme Rada, was established in Slutsk, and on 14–15 November a local Belarusian congress took place. A Belarusian rifle brigade of more than a thousand men was then formed. However, as Polish troops withdrew from Slutsk on 24 November, the Red Army gained control of the region within the next few days. The Belarusian rifle brigade installed itself in the thirty-kilometer-wide neutral zone between the Polish and Soviet armies. It continued harassing Soviet troops until early December 1920, when they finally entered the neutral zone, forcing the brigade over to the Polish side, where it was disarmed.[16] Thus ended the last desperate attempts at establishing some semblance of Polish-supported Ukrainian and Belarusian statehood.

The Failure of Federalism in Central Lithuania

The final defeat of Petliura and Balakhovich, together with continued Lithuanian unwillingness to enter into any federation with Poland, could not but affect the situation in Wilno, where the federalist party was becoming more and more unpopular. The only well-liked federalist was General Żeligowski, idolized by local Poles as "the savior" of the city. Being a true military man, however, he shunned politics and did not bother trying to gain any converts to the federalist idea. As it was, most local Poles remained reluctant to agree to any federal ties with Lithuania, since they perceived it as anti-Polish. Instead, they desired direct incorporation into Poland and were suspicious of the goals of the Provisional Governing Commission, which tried to support federalism. They were therefore very happy when Władysław Raczkiewicz, the official representative of the Polish government, came to reside in Wilno in December 1920. In the same month, Central Lithuania was visited by a delegation of the Polish Parliament. Based on its report, the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee resolved that "the Wilno region is an unalienable part of Polish national territory" and that "only a free popular vote can decide the issue of this land's state affiliation."[17]

Unable to find popular support for its pro-federalist leanings, the Provisional Governing Commission naturally opposed any such pronouncements. This opposition backfired, however, as local organs of self-government began ignoring the commission and public opinion turned sharply against it. Feeling

pressure, several key federalist members of the commission resigned in mid-January 1921. They were replaced by "specialists" with no political agenda, whose main task was to lead the quasi-state until a local parliament could be elected by the people. Elections were delayed, however, to let the mediation of the League of Nations, already under way, run its due course first, since the prevailing sentiments of such a parliamentary body would surely prejudge the question of the future of Central Lithuania.[18] Yet, this mediation appeared to be unlikely to overcome the intransigence of both Kaunas, which would accept nothing short of direct incorporation of Wilno into Lithuania, and Warsaw, which would agree to this only at the price of Polish-Lithuanian federation.

Recess and New Delegations

With the signing of the preliminary peace, the Polish delegation asked for a brief, informal break in negotiations. Dąbski and the members of Parliament needed to go to Warsaw to present reports to their respective parties and lobby for smooth ratification of the agreement. They also needed to receive authorization to conduct definitive peace negotiations. Only skeleton staff remained in Riga, led by Wasilewski.

The Soviet delegation likewise left a skeleton staff, headed by Obolenskii. The two remaining members, Manuil'skii and Kirov, were recalled to Moscow by the Central Committee. Ioffe, on his own initiative, also left to make a personal report to Lenin. Chicherin was "decisively against" both the break in negotiations and Ioffe's coming to Moscow. The latter argued, however, that once Dąbski left Riga, it would be awkward to stay, the more so since there would be "no serious work" to do. Moreover, he insisted, "I am also a human being and I also need to take a rest." Indeed, a journalist, reporting on the signing of the preliminaries, noted that the Soviet delegation head, "tired by more than five days and nights of almost constant work, . . . looked extremely pale." Most of all, Ioffe did not want to be involved in the negotiation of the definitive treaty, claiming Lenin had promised to "liberate" him from this. He pleaded he had "no longer any strength to conduct tedious negotiations, coming down to simple trade in trifles without any political significance."[19]

Chicherin disagreed completely with this assessment, arguing that "the coming economic and especially financial negotiations with Poland" were "extremely important." Detailed preparation for them was imperative. To facilitate this, in late October, Obolenskii, as the co-head of the mixed financial-economic commission, made a trip to Moscow for "talks" with Nikolai N. Krestinskii, the commissar of finance.[20] During his absence in Riga, the

Soviet delegation was led by Iakov Ganetskii, the Soviet minister to Latvia who had just been appointed a member of the peace delegation. Most significantly, Chicherin managed to convince Lenin that Ioffe's leadership at Riga was necessary. While Ioffe could afford to ignore Chicherin, claiming sickness, he had to comply with a personal request from Lenin, made on 25 October.[21]

Thus, the new Soviet delegation for definitive peace negotiations was led by Ioffe. Obolenskii, his deputy, and Ganetskii, represented Russia, while Ukraine was represented by Emmanuil I. Kviring, a top Party official in Donetsk.[22] Lorents remained as the secretary general. In view of the relative unimportance of Kviring and his Ukrainian experts, Chicherin specifically instructed Ioffe not to treat them with haughty contempt.[23]

The Polish delegation, too, was almost completely changed. This was mainly due to Dąbski, who threatened to resign if representatives of the Parliament were included. Having had a miniature parliament within the preliminary peace delegation had resulted in lack of cohesion and had made Dąbski's life very difficult, forcing him to spend much time and effort on negotiations with his own members. While the need for consensus on political issues might then have merited such an approach, he argued, it was not needed in a delegation dealing with the essentially technical issues which remained to be resolved. Indeed, the preliminary peace delegation as a whole was not prepared to deal with such highly technical issues, and even its own secretary maintained that "its present composition cannot stand, as it is completely unable to do serious work, especially in areas requiring special knowledge."[24]

Warsaw agreed with these arguments, with the caveat that parliamentarians might be sent to Riga should such a need arise. The new delegation was formed exclusively of government specialists. Stanisław Kauzik was a department head in the Ministry of Finance, Edward Lechowicz worked as a department head in the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, and Henryk Strasburger was the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. The only surviving member of the preliminary peace delegation was Wasilewski, its deputy head. The secretaries and experts remained the same, with the significant addition of Lieutenant-Colonel Ignacy Matuszewski, head of the Second Department, as the chief military expert.[25]

After long preparations and discussions, the new delegation arrived in Riga on 13 November. Ioffe had already been waiting since 2 November. A meeting between the two delegation heads, their deputies, and military experts took place on the day of Dąbski's arrival, while the first plenary session of definitive peace negotiations followed four days later.[26]

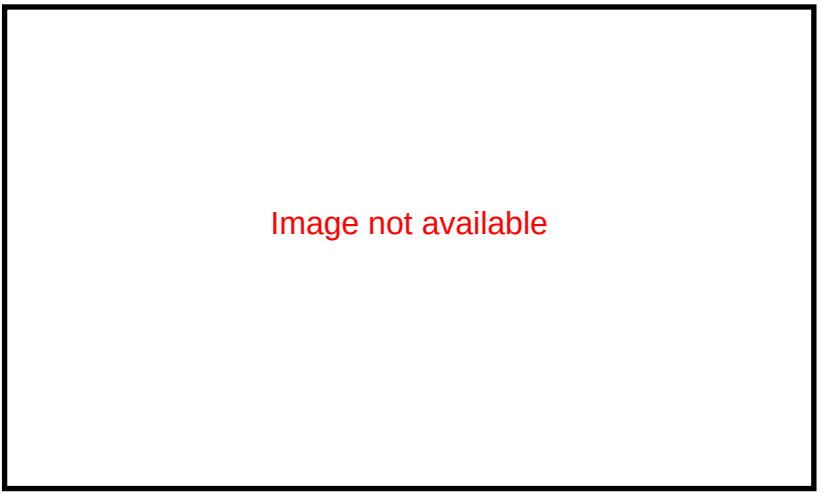

FIG. 13. Polish delegation at the definitive peace negotiations at Riga. From left: Edward Lechowicz, Leon Wasilewski, Jan Dąbski, Henryk Strasburger, and Stanisław Kauzik. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

At this point, it was in Poland's interest to push for a speedy conclusion of negotiations. The country was mired in a deep economic crisis, with inflation spiraling out of control. The three-way relationship between the government, the Parliament, and the Chief of State was increasingly tense. The capture of Wilno by General Żeligowski did not win Poland any friends in the international arena, as it was understood that Warsaw supported his venture. Having lost the plebiscite in East Prussia in July 1920, the Poles feared losing the upcoming and extremely important plebiscite in Upper Silesia. It was generally assumed that the signing of the definitive peace treaty would significantly boost Poland's chances in that plebiscite, as the voters would no longer be worried by the prospect of being conscripted into the Polish Army to fight the Bolsheviks.

The Soviets, on the other hand, had no particular reason to hurry, as their situation had clearly improved since the signing of the preliminaries. On 28 October they began their final offensive against Wrangel, which was crowned by the piercing of his defenses on 9 November and a subsequent rout. The military operations against Petliura and Balakhovich were proceeding successfully. Moreover, in November Soviet Russia hosted a French mission, while also conducting trade negotiations with Great Britain and the United States. Thus, the overall situation at the resumption of negotiations appeared to be somewhat advantageous to the Soviets.[27]

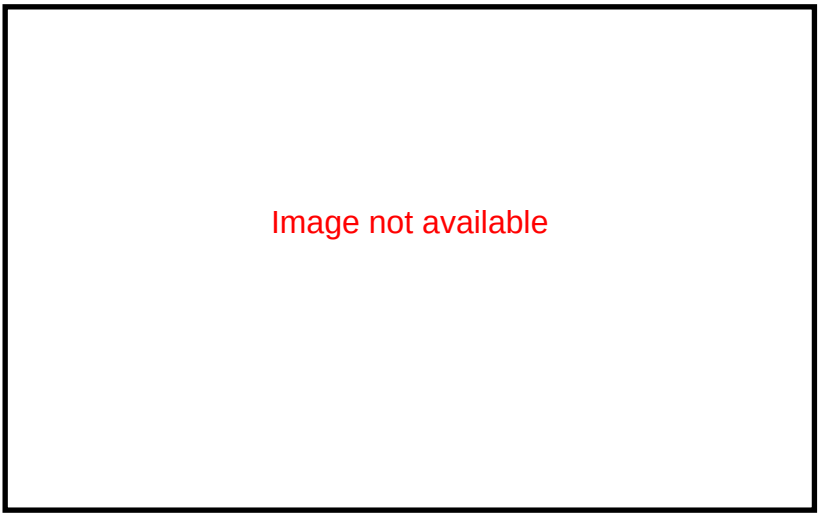

FIG. 14. Plenary session of the definitive peace negotiations at Riga. On the left, the Soviet delegation; on the right, the Polish delegation; in the rear, journalists and invited guests. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

Mutual Accusations

Right after the signing of the preliminaries, the Poles began "to exert great pressure" on the Bolsheviks to release Polish hostages, and to begin the exchange of prisoners "as soon as possible." Wasilewski pointed out "the abnormality of any further detention of hostages." The Soviet delegation, however, acting on specific orders from Chicherin and instructions from the Polish Bureau at the Bolshevik Central Committee, refused even to consider these issues.[28] First of all, the Bolsheviks maintained spuriously that, by definition, there could be no Polish hostages in Soviet Russia, "since that institution was abolished by the declaration signed by Markhlevskii on behalf of the Soviet government" in November 1919.[29] There could possibly be hostages only in Soviet Ukraine, which was not bound by the declaration. Furthermore, the Tsentrevak, the Soviet agency charged with transferring prisoners, held "on a question of principle that one cannot begin the exchange before ratification of the definitive treaty."[30] In any event, the Soviets argued, any release of hostages and exchange of prisoners could not take place before special mixed commissions had been created to oversee those operations. Yet, the Bolshevik delegation, while interested in the creation of a mixed commission in Poland, had no authorization to negotiate about the creation of a mixed commission in the Soviet state.

The Poles accused the Bolsheviks of ill will, especially since the preliminaries called for an "instant" creation of these commissions and an "immediate" release and exchange. They insisted that the basis for the release and exchange could be either the Mikaszewicze agreement concluded by Kossakowski and Markhlevskii in the fall of 1919 or the Berlin agreement of 6 September 1920.[31] The Soviets, however, argued that the Mikaszewicze agreement had been invalidated by the Polish spring offensive of 1920. The Berlin agreement, on the other hand, was to be replaced by a new agreement based on the preliminaries, regardless of the fact that they presently had no authorization to conclude it.

The Poles charged that the Soviets were trying to delay the creation of the required mixed commissions ad infinitum, while in the meantime hostages might be executed at any moment. Indeed, according to Polish sources, more than a dozen hostages, including two seventeen-year-old girls, had recently been shot by a firing squad in Smolensk. To find a solution, the Poles proposed an exchange of Soviet commissars, held as prisoners of war, for Polish hostages. The Bolshevik leadership, however, was not interested in such an exchange, as it considered these commissars relatively unimportant. Moscow would have preferred to receive, instead, Communists imprisoned in Poland for subversion. Yet, most of these Communists would rather stay imprisoned in "bourgeois" Poland than be free in Soviet Russia. In view of their reluctance to be exchanged, Moscow doubted whether the whole scheme was worthwhile.[32]

In the end, it was possible to find forty-nine imprisoned Polish Communists who were willing to move to Soviet Russia, and they were duly exchanged for a similar number of hostages. Yet, the Polish side was far from happy about the exchange, which it considered "disadvantageous." They agreed to it only under duress, trying to save the hostages' lives. They reasoned that, according to the preliminaries, all Polish hostages should have been released by the Bolsheviks, and then in due course simply repatriated to Poland.[33]

While the Poles continued to accuse the Soviets of ill will, they themselves were soon accused of breaching the preliminaries by supporting the troops of Petliura and Balakhovich. Immediately after the signing, the Soviets, while very much displeased by the continued Polish support for these troops, decided to refrain from making any protests for the time being, as it might adversely affect the agreement's ratification by the Polish Parliament. However, the very day after the Poles ratified the preliminaries on 22 October 1920, the Soviets raised the issue of Petliura's troops at a mixed armistice subcommission that met at Berdichev and dealt with the southern part of the front line.

This opening gambit was followed by a couple of notes handed by Obolenskii to Wasilewski at Riga. The note of 29 October charged that "Petliura's

troops appear to be an integral part of the Polish Army," yet they "continue hostilities."[34] The Soviets did not accept the declaration of the Polish representatives at Berdichev, who had refused "to take any responsibility for the actions of Petliura's troops." They demanded that both Polish troops and Petliura's army be withdrawn behind the new Polish-Soviet border.[35] The note of 30 October charged, however falsely, that the troops of both Żeligowski and Balakhovich had entered "the Polish [i.e. Grabski] corridor" between Soviet Russia and Lithuania, "thus endangering the stability of the armistice."[36] Consequently, the Soviets demanded that the troops of Żeligowski be removed from the corridor, and those of Balakhovich be disarmed and interned.[37]

Considering that most of these charges were untrue, it was not difficult for Wasilewski to refute them. In particular, he emphasized that Petliura's forces were an entity separate from the Polish Army, and that, insofar as they continued fighting, they did so at their own risk. Their political and military center was Kamenets-Podol'sk, lying east of the new Polish-Soviet border. Should these troops cross onto the Polish side of the border, they would be duly disarmed.[38]

Unfazed by this refutation, the Soviets responded with informal protests related to the issue of Polish troops' withdrawal to the border line. The armistice agreement obliged Polish troops to withdraw from the front line to the border line "after" the exchange of ratification documents.[39] In the absence of any further details, the term "after" was open to interpretation. The Poles argued that "preliminary work of a mixed commission" was needed to begin the withdrawal. The Soviets, on the other hand, insisted that the withdrawal must start immediately without any further consultation. Indeed, Chicherin condemned the Polish position as "a glaring breach of the [preliminary] treaty," and he waited for Ioffe to arrive in Riga to make "a sharp and militant diplomatic demonstration" about it.[40]

Yet, after his arrival, Ioffe considered kicking up a "great uproar to be presently premature, since [the possibility of doing so] is a great trump on our hand." Given that "the Poles very much fear any reproach for nonobservance of the treaty," he believed it possible to extract concessions by "threatening them with uproar." Thus, informal protests already lodged with the Polish peace delegation were entirely appropriate, together with a propaganda campaign in the Soviet press. Chicherin, however, while noting that "the proposed press campaign" was "already under way," did not think it possible "to put off coming out publicly against the breaches of the treaty by the Poles." Indeed, the Central Committee had already decided to undertake "everywhere the most furious agitation against the Polish betrayal."[41] This agitation campaign was to proceed on a "European" scale.[42]

Accordingly, on 13 November, Ioffe officially protested to Dąbski that Petliura's and Balakhovich's troops had been formed, armed, and equipped by Poland on its territory. Thus, "the general spirit of the treaty has been breached." This Polish behavior "may lead to renewal of hostilities."[43] In reply, the Polish delegation pointed out that its government was determined to preserve peaceful relations with Russia and, consequently, was observing the terms of the preliminaries to the letter. No help had been given to either of these troops after the exchange of ratification documents on 2 November, even though "Poland sympathizes with Petliura and considers that he indeed represents the national masses of Ukraine." Petliura and Balakhovich, in any case, were acting on their own and at their own risk. At the same time, the Soviet government was working on creating Polish units within the Red Army in a blatant breach of not only the spirit, but also the letter of the preliminary peace.[44]

Following these verbal skirmishes, two agreements were signed on the next day. According to the first, Poland was to continue its financing of the 1920–1921 sugar campaign at seven sugar refineries in eastern Volhynia, which lay east of the border line and west of the front line. Since this territory, presently still occupied by Polish troops, belonged formally to Soviet Ukraine, Poland was to take 70 percent of all sugar produced there during the campaign. The second agreement related to the withdrawal of Polish troops from the front line to the border line. It was to begin no later than midnight on the night of 19–20 November.[45]

This withdrawal, however, did not begin as scheduled. In Belarus, Polish troops still delayed, preventing the Bolsheviks from cutting off Balakhovich's last route of escape into Polish-held territory. This delay was a clear breach of the agreement just signed, and the Soviets reacted by suspending negotiations. Dąbski instantly wired Premier Witos, demanding a speedy withdrawal "unless we want war," and threatening to resign as the delegation head. As a result, Polish troops in Belarus began their withdrawal on 24 November, and completed it in two days. Bolshevik forces drew up to the border line within the next few days.[46]

A more complicated situation arose in Ukraine. Eastern Volhynia was affected by epidemics of contagious diseases, and Polish troops insisted on remaining there, in quarantine, for fear of spreading them. This was precisely the area with the seven sugar refineries. Apparently this was in fact only a coincidence, however convenient for the Poles, since K. I. Shutko, the Soviet co-head of the mixed armistice commission (PRUVSK) at Minsk, agreed to postpone Polish withdrawal from "the area affected by epidemics." Nonetheless, the agreement greatly upset Moscow. It quickly removed Shutko and demanded

that his Polish counterpart, Colonel Józef Rybak, be recalled as well. Chicherin, in particular, was incensed and accused Shutko of being "good-for-nothing" and "dancing to the Polish tune." Yet, "the damage has already been done," as the chief of Soviet diplomacy lamented.[47]

Shutko's replacement was N. I. Iordanskii, who soon signed an agreement with Colonel Rybak creating a special subcommission of the PRUVSK, residing at Równe and charged with medical and veterinary help for the areas affected by the epidemics. Viewing the creation of the subcommission as an "obstruction" to speedy Polish withdrawal, Chicherin branded the agreement as "absurd," while dismissing Iordanskii as "a toy in the hands of Rybak."[48] To prevent the implementation of agreements signed by Shutko and Iordanskii, the Soviets now demanded that the PRUVSK itself be dissolved. The Poles would not hear about it, pointing out that its dissolution would be in breach of the armistice agreement signed at Riga; however, as a gesture of goodwill, they agreed to recall Colonel Rybak, who was replaced by Colonel Jan M. Hempel.[49] Faced with this concession and the fact that, as Ioffe put it, "in the PRUVSK our people made fools of themselves," the Soviets reluctantly withdrew their demand for the commission to be dissolved.[50] Thus, the two agreements were implemented and Polish troops withdrew from eastern Volhynia only after the epidemics had been eradicated.

Having essentially withdrawn their troops, the Poles probably expected the Soviet propaganda campaign, blaming Poland for "betrayal," to subside. This expectation would not have been unreasonable, considering also that by then the last remnants of Petliura's troops had already crossed onto the Polish side of the border and been duly disarmed. At the same time, Balakhovich's troops found themselves in dire straits and their defeat was widely expected in Riga. Chicherin even admitted to Ganetskii that "the undertakings of Balakhovich and Savinkov were not serious." Still, the campaign of verbal attacks in the Soviet press remained in full swing, while Ioffe, in his words, "bombarded Dąbski with notes protesting the breach of agreements and threatening to take it into account economically." The Soviet pressure at this point was dictated mainly by the desire to gain tactical advantage during the initial stage of negotiations.[51]

At this critical juncture, Sapieha suddenly entered the fray, apparently considering Dąbski too soft and amenable. In his note of 25 November, the chief of Polish diplomacy argued that the Soviets' continued protests were "baseless," their real goal being either to cause delay or to use the negotiations for agitation. In any case, these protests created "an atmosphere of uncertainty," detrimental to negotiations. Poland sincerely desired to end the war, as was clear from its demobilization of seven classes of recruits. The Soviets should give proof of a

similar attitude by agreeing to a deadline for conclusion of the definitive treaty, and to military guarantees of maintaining the state of peace.[52] Moreover, Poland was "profoundly confounded" by the Soviet position on releasing hostages and exchanging prisoners, as it denied "all generally recognized humanitarian principles." The Polish government protested "especially against the blatantly unlawful arrest" of the members of the Polish mission to the Caucasian republics, headed by Tytus Filipowicz.[53]

While the idea of Sapieha's note may have been tactically sound, his execution was rather disastrous, as he sent the note to Moscow without having even advised Dąbski. The latter, clearly irritated, pointed out to his superior that "it is extremely awkward when the Polish delegation learns about the action of its own government from the opposing side." As for the merits, argued Dąbski, establishing a deadline was not a good idea. The Bolsheviks would delay until the last week; then, for lack of time, the treaty would be filled with generalities, while it lay in Poland's interest to have a very detailed treaty, anticipating every possibility. The proposed military guarantees were likewise ill-advised. The military representative on the delegation, Lieutenant-Colonel Matuszewski, considered them disadvantageous, and had already offered his resignation in response to this unexpected proposal. Dąbski concluded that Warsaw was "too nervous," took the Soviets' belligerent verbal attacks too seriously, and arrived at inappropriately far-reaching conclusions.[54]

In his reply to Sapieha, Chicherin cleverly put the main emphasis on his Polish counterpart's mistake, and expressed his "uttermost astonishment with the unusual method of conducting negotiations by radio, bypassing the duly authorized delegations present at Riga." He further repeated the usual Soviet accusation that Polish assistance to "the rebel bands of Petliura and Balakhovich" was "an obvious breach of the Riga treaty." All such Polish breaches would be taken into account "at the moment of the final settling of accounts" between Poland and the Soviet state. Chicherin "joyfully" welcomed the idea of speeding up peace negotiations and had nothing against establishing a deadline for conclusion of definitive peace, "as long as it will be possible." In any event, delays in negotiations were caused by the Poles, including especially Dąbski's late return to Riga. Finally, the Soviet state could not give Poland military guarantees without having received similar guarantees from "all hostile governments."[55]

Thus, the trading of accusations during the seven weeks following the preliminaries did not produce any clear winner, even though the Soviets appeared to have scored a significant propaganda victory. In the meantime, negotiations remained largely at an impasse, and no real progress was made toward the definitive treaty.

Ioffe Shores Up Dąbski's Position

By late November, Ioffe had realized with all clarity that further violent accusations against Poland would be detrimental to the negotiations, even though these might score the Soviets a few propaganda points. The Poles were unsure whether the Soviets really wanted a definitive peace, and feared that the accusations were meant by the Bolsheviks as a prelude to another war. The Polish press speculated that the Bolsheviks, having routed Wrangel, might be preparing to invade the country again.[56] Moreover, as Ioffe put it, "in recent days, the German press has been whipping up with particular force all kinds of rumors about our new war against Poland. I believe that Poland is really afraid of this, which significantly strengthens the position of Piłsudski and the war party. If it were made clear in the process of negotiations that we do not intend to touch Poland, that would be extraordinarily useful."

Therefore, argued Ioffe, the main task at this stage was to "lessen the Polish fear and distrust of us" and "to stabilize the situation." This could be done by agreeing to begin quickly the exchange of prisoners of war. Even more important would be "to conclude immediately any kind of concrete commercial transactions." In return, Ioffe wanted both to receive the immediate right of transit through Poland and to extend the armistice denunciation notice period to "two to three months." This plan of action had a good chance of success, he insisted: "Bearing in mind that Poland's material situation is hopeless, it will not at all be difficult to buy it."[57]

Chicherin gave Ioffe's plan very cautious approval. The key to this approval was the view of the supreme commander, who considered it "advantageous to speed up the exchange of prisoners and to extend the armistice denunciation notice period."[58] The Tsentrevak, while no longer opposed on principle, was "somewhat fearful" of the exchange. The other interested Soviet commissariats were yet to be consulted.[59]

As for the idea of commercial transactions, this was a long-standing mantra of Soviet diplomacy. After the signing of the preliminaries, Chicherin had instructed his diplomats at Riga "to constantly emphasize our intention of economic rapprochement with Poland, which will help to emancipate it from the Entente."[60] Many Bolsheviks doubted, however, whether the revolutionary Soviet economy would be able to deliver goods needed for such commercial transactions. Ganetskii, for instance, lamented: "All our policy is based on economic relations; we cry to the whole world that we have a lot of cargo ready to be sent off—[yet, as soon as real economic relations begin] all of this will turn out to be a bluff and empty promises." Accordingly, Chicherin advised

Ioffe that "premature commercial transactions" would be "risky, since in our present economic situation they may lead to disillusion and coolness."[61]

His plan having thus received only cautious and partial approval, Ioffe held a confidential meeting with Dąbski on 29 November. He argued it was important at this difficult stage "to strengthen faith in our nations and in the whole world in the firmness of peaceful intentions and in a rapid definitive peace." While the Soviets were unable to give Poland the requested military guarantees, they could offer political guarantees. Such guarantees would automatically flow from: (1) an agreement extending the armistice denunciation notice period from the present fourteen days to a month and a half; (2) a number of agreements on Russian export of commodities needed by Poland; and (3) granting to Soviet Russia transit rights for certain commodities. If the armistice denunciation notice period could be extended, Ioffe would "immediately" agree to an exchange of prisoners of war. Moreover, he expected that definitive peace would be reached within a month and a half. As for the commodities that Russia could offer Poland, Ioffe mentioned grain and timber.[62]

Dąbski replied merely that he would pass this proposal to Warsaw. Indeed, he could hardly commit himself to anything more, since he had just offered his conditional resignation as the delegation head. This extreme step was caused by Warsaw's recent decision to send a parliamentary delegation to Riga. Apparently, Sapieha was worried by the impasse in negotiations, and hoped that the six members of Parliament, who had acquitted themselves quite well during the preliminary phase, would now be able to find a way to break the stalemate.[63] Dąbski, however, repeated all his previous arguments against their participation, emphasizing that he did "not feel equal to the task of heading so numerous and so complicated a delegation" and that he was determined to resign. He naturally hoped that Warsaw, faced with such determined opposition, would reconsider sending the parliamentarians, but in the meantime he avoided making any definite moves as the delegation head, so as not to prejudge issues that might soon be dealt with by his successor.

At the same time, Dąbski cleverly tried to give the impression that he was in control. Thus, he reported to Sapieha that "the Bolsheviks, following the failed attempt to terrorize us, behave quietly and soberly, taking our drafts as the basis for discussion." He claimed, moreover, that the Soviet delegation could not match the high level of professional expertise displayed by the Poles, and that the initiative remained "nearly always in our hands."[64]

While Ioffe would certainly have disagreed with the latter claim, he nonetheless completely shared Dąbski's opposition to the coming of the parliamentarians to Riga, although for different reasons. First and foremost, he very much

preferred to deal with Dąbski, whom he considered "slow-witted," than with Stanisław Grabski, who was "simply cleverer." In addition, Ioffe feared, the parliamentarians would be not only "less pliable and more demanding on financial-economic issues," but also "more confident." He expected that "if Dąbski retires, it will be worse because with him it is easier to come to an agreement." Finally, he reasoned, "one has already managed to persuade Dąbski and his delegation about something, while if the parliamentarians come, one will have to start all over again."[65]

To avoid all these difficulties, Ioffe persistently tried "to strengthen Dąbski." Thus, at the inaugural plenary session of the definitive peace negotiations, he emphasized that he hoped for "quick and easy" agreement because the Polish delegation was led by a man who had been able "to create the atmosphere of compromise" during the preliminary negotiations. Subsequently, he officially advised Dąbski that the Soviets were "displeased with the coming of the members of Parliament because that will delay negotiations, forcing us to raise issues already examined just for the information of the new delegation members." Most importantly, Ioffe realized with his usual sharpness that a spectacular way to help Dąbski hold onto his post would be to release Filipowicz. This, he argued before Chicherin, was "necessary as a personal favor" to the Polish delegation head.[66] Securing the Polish diplomat's release was not an easy matter, however, as it was opposed not only by the Cheka, but also by influential Polish Bolsheviks in Moscow. In the end, Ioffe managed to persuade Lenin, and Filipowicz was sent to Riga to be released there.[67] Having received such "a personal favor" from Ioffe, Dąbski's position as the delegation head became unassailable, and Warsaw no longer considered sending the parliamentarians to Riga.

The Wilno Issue: The Soviets Oppose International Involvement

While Ioffe's job was to negotiate an acceptable definitive peace treaty with Poland, Chicherin was in charge of Soviet foreign policy in its entirety. In the grand scheme of things, as he perceived it, Poland was "a small state," unable to conduct its own independent policy; therefore, it seemed crucial to Chicherin to know the attitude of France, Warsaw's main protector and the most anti-Bolshevik among the great powers. Yet, in the wake of the preliminary treaty he had difficulty interpreting the situation, as "France's policy itself" was "unclear" to him. "Did France invent the Polish-Latvian corridor or was it entirely against the Riga treaty, trying to break it off through the National Democrats and

Piłsudski?" he wondered.[68] Intelligence from Berlin indicated that France had "decided to use the Riga treaty as a mask [behind which] to prepare a new intervention against us." Moreover, the Lithuanian premier, Kazys Grinius, warned Aksel'rod on 28 October that Poland intended to attack Soviet Russia with the help of the Baltic states, and that the Entente was preparing a new intervention. Yet, both Germany and Lithuania had a vested interest in preventing any understanding between Soviet Russia and the Entente. While Chicherin did not discount intelligence from Germany, he believed that the answer to the paramount question "What is France now preparing?" was to be found in "Polish intelligence." "So many threads from various cities lead to Poland," he reasoned, "that it would be necessary for us to be able to form an idea of what is happening in Poland itself."[69]

Accordingly, the Soviets resolved to spend huge amounts of money on gathering intelligence. A new contact, known as Rupert Orlov, was hired in October 1920 for as much as 150,000 dollars a week to supply "Polish information."[70] Yet, the results were disappointing. In November, Chicherin lamented to Ioffe: "One can say that our information on the general situation is scandalously bad." In December, he still complained to him: "Intelligence received by us from Poland is contradictory. . . . How is one supposed to operate given such contradictory evidence?"[71] To make matters worse, Moscow, itself introducing a totalitarian political system, had great difficulty understanding and interpreting politics in a democratic environment. Chicherin scratched his head in despair: "We don't know whether the Polish government is following a firm line, as there are elements there that are constantly at odds and fight among themselves, and everyone makes policy, today Dąbski, tomorrow Piłsudski, sometimes Witos, sometimes Grabski, Sapieha less than anyone else."

This scarcity of reliable intelligence, compounded by Moscow's inability to understand democracy and its tendency to see the Entente's sinister plots everywhere, explains why, in early November, Ioffe, "having familiarized myself with the situation," concluded erroneously yet confidently it was "imperialism's new grand plan to create a large strike force against us in Żeligowski's region which is under no one's jurisdiction. . . . All White Guard bands, possibly including those of Wrangel, Petliura, Balakhovich, Savinkov, etc., once defeated at their battle fronts, will gather in this region to be [re-]formed and supplied through French-occupied Memel which is directly connected with Żeligowski. This region is divided from us by Poland and Latvia, with whom we are at peace, and any attempt on our side to put an end to the organization of this strike force will be considered a breach of our treaties with Latvia and Poland. I assume that there is agreement on this account between France, Poland, Latvia, and

Żeligowski." According to Ioffe, France intended to "draw us into another war not only against all sorts of White Guards, but also against Latvia and Poland, while putting the odium on us." He insisted that "the only countermeasure against this plan would be not to respond to the provocation and not to fret." Chicherin found this assessment to be "serious."[72]

A month later, Ioffe significantly revised his original assessment, arguing that "the Entente's grand plan in regard to Żeligowski has already been canceled." Nonetheless, he maintained, while "the West's attempts at open intervention are definitely out of the question," the Entente would still try to use the Wilno region to play "those minor dirty tricks which I consider unavoidable as long as we coexist with imperialism." Consequently, the Soviets should oppose the League of Nations' decision of 28 October 1920 to send international peacekeeping troops to Wilno to allow the population to have a free vote on the future of the contested region.[73] Ioffe deemed these troops to be "an expeditionary corps," and pointed out that their presence there would be "disadvantageous" to the Soviets. In case of renewal of war with Poland "we will be deprived of operational lines of advance on Wilno, Grodno, and Lida." Moreover, he argued, once "bourgeois Europe itself" acquired a base in Wilno, it could play "all kinds of dirty tricks" on the Soviets and threaten them with "a new intervention" in an effort to make them more pliable in trade negotiations with the West and peace negotiations with Poland.[74]

In view of this perceived danger, Moscow finally decided to break its silence on Żeligowski.[75] The note handed by Ioffe to Dąbski on 11 December charged that while General Żeligowski had close ties with the Polish military authorities, no government took formal responsibility for the region occupied by him, making it "a very convenient place for actions irreconcilable with the treaties concluded by the neighboring governments with the Soviet republics." The note further claimed, however falsely, that "rebels from the routed bands of . . . Balakhovich . . . have found shelter on General Żeligowski's territory, where they are being organized in new armed detachments, preparing for attack on the Russian republic." Yet, the most important aspect of the note was its "decisive" protest "against the [proposed] sending to Wilno" of international military forces by "the so-called 'League of Nations.'" Poland would be held responsible by the Soviets for "any hostile actions against the Soviet republics, undertaken on Żeligowski's territory."[76]

Three days later, Dąbski handed Ioffe Sapieha's reply. It pointed out that according to the preliminaries, "the issues contested by Poland and Lithuania cannot and should not be a subject of negotiations" between Warsaw and Moscow. General Żeligowski's territory was separated from Soviet Russia by

territory fully under Polish control; thus, any conceivable threat to the Soviets from this direction was "out of the question." All troops that entered Polish territory after having fought the Bolsheviks "were immediately disarmed and interned." The task of the international military force was to keep peace in the territories contested by Lithuania and Poland. "It is impossible to think bona fide" that they would engage in any hostile actions against Soviet Russia, argued Sapieha. He ended by emphasizing Warsaw's wish to believe that the whole Soviet note was merely "a baseless misunderstanding."[77]

The last word in this exchange, however, belonged to the Soviets. In a note of 16 December, Ioffe recognized that according to the preliminaries, the Polish-Lithuanian border should be established by the two sides without Soviet interference. Nonetheless, "no government in the world can ever treat with indifference the issue of who precisely appears to be its neighbor." Likewise, "Russia cannot be indifferent in regard to what takes place in the region occupied by General Żeligowski."[78]

The question of international troops in Wilno soon became moot, however, as a result of Lithuania's reversal on the issue. While Voldemaras, Kaunas's representative at the League of Nations, had originally agreed to the sending of troops, the Lithuanian government considered this a mistake and soon sent Naruševičius to Geneva to correct it.[79] Indeed, there seemed to be little doubt that the majority of the population in the Wilno region would have voted for Poland, rather than for Lithuania. Yet, despite the whole issue's having become moot, the Soviet notes on the Wilno question were to have important ramifications for Polish-Soviet definitive peace negotiations.

Stalemate in the Commissions and Ioffe's Frustration with Moscow

Paradoxically, while it was Ioffe who signed the two Soviet notes on the Wilno issue, he decisively opposed them. In fact, he even considered for a moment disobeying Chicherin's instructions to deliver to Dąbski the note of 11 December. He argued that such a note would have been very appropriate "three to four weeks ago,"[80] when the Soviets were still in the midst of their campaign of accusations and threats against Poland. "Now, however, we have decided to stop saber-rattling and adopt a peace-loving tone in an effort to convince the Polish people that we have no intention of capturing Warsaw—although we will not let ourselves be milked, either." The note, Ioffe insisted, was sure to cause fear that the Soviets meant it as "a diplomatic preparation" for a military offensive on Wilno. His work of recent days

had thus been wasted. "It is very difficult to be a diplomat," he complained to Chicherin, when Moscow made such errors.

Ioffe still believed that in the Żeligowski region "a commotion is brewing"; yet, it was "not that terrifying," since imperialism was preparing it "just in case." For the moment, "Europe wants very much to trade with us and will not risk coming out openly against us." As for "the little republics, one can stake his head" that Estonia, Latvia, Finland, "and even Poland, will not risk getting involved in a new war against us." Indeed, it was "clear" to Ioffe that "in Poland no one wants war, even—likely—Piłsudski." At the same time, the Soviet campaign of accusations and threats revealed that "Poland is afraid of us, i.e., afraid of a new war."[81]

This assessment was the foundation on which Ioffe built his approach to definitive peace negotiations. On 30 November, he wrote to Lenin: "Given this mood in Poland, if we said: 'There will be no war, but you're going to get less than you expected [at the signing of the preliminaries],' then they would gladly accept [what we presently offer]." Accordingly, his plan of action required the Soviet campaign of accusations and threats to be curbed. "The rather alarmist tone of our press is possibly already inappropriate," he warned, as it might lead to a result opposite from the one desired. "We may have already gone too far and made some circles assume that war is unavoidable," he feared. Yet, from the Polish point of view, if war could not be avoided anyway, then there was no point in making concessions. Therefore, Ioffe tried to impress on Lenin that "the only possibility of getting concessions from Poland" lay in "precisely such a change of tone, now." The Soviet press should campaign under a new "slogan": "We don't want to wage war, and we aren't striving to revise the obligations we have assumed; we are willing to give Poland what we can, but on no account will we give more than we can afford, even if it leads to war."[82]

While Ioffe's advice was not clearly rejected, it was not heeded either. On 5 December, Chicherin wired him that according to "extensive intelligence," Balakhovich "is preparing significant forces on Polish territory for a serious attack on us and one fine day he will unexpectedly swoop upon our troops." Moreover, in the Polish "deep rear there are places where White Guard forces are concentrating, coming from various parts of Europe; there are a lot of indications that Kalisz is such a point." Despite the enormous expenditures on its gathering, Soviet intelligence was apparently quite flawed. Kalisz, for instance, a town in western Poland, was merely the place of internment of Petliura's troops. In any case, the Central Committee decided, as Chicherin put it, "to undertake a violent [propaganda] campaign in regard to these adventures; it is necessary to support it by decisive diplomatic demonstrations at Riga."[83]

Accordingly, the two Soviet notes on the Wilno issue were meant to play a vital role in this new propaganda campaign. At the same time, they inaugurated the period of Ioffe's profound frustration and open disagreement with the policies followed by Moscow. Quarreling with Chicherin who oversaw the implementation of those policies, Ioffe realized that he essentially disagreed with Lenin and the Central Committee itself.[84] His frustration was caused mainly by what he perceived as Moscow's senseless meddling in the issues under negotiation in the mixed commissions.

The financial-economic commission, headed by Strasburger and Obolenskii, was treated by both sides as the most important. Here, the main bone of contention was the issue of Poland's share of the former Imperial State Bank's gold reserves. The Poles fixed it initially at 296 million rubles. Chicherin insisted that this amount was "outrageously high" and "ought to be lowered to a reasonable level." Moreover, he vowed, "we will not give gold but concessions," which would be "of benefit also to us." For instance, the Poles could operate iron ore mines in the Krivyi Rog region, leaving some part of the ore to the Bolsheviks. "The indispensable condition" of agreement on this issue, argued Chicherin, would be Poland's immediate granting the Soviets the right to unimpeded transit through its territory. Soviet transit rights should include war materials and extend to such countries as Germany and Austria.[85]

In mid-December, the Poles decided to lower their demand to 236 million rubles. Ioffe had no doubt that they would "agree right away to a quarter" of that amount. Yet, the Soviets would not offer them nearly as much. They maintained that Poland was entitled only to a share of the gold reserves created from taxes collected by the Russian Empire, the total of which they calculated at 307 million. The Polish share amounted to no more than 30 million, insisted Ioffe, and justified that amount as "proportionate to the population." This justification failed to take into account that Polish territories had belonged to the most developed parts of the empire and their population had generated a particularly large share of total taxes. Dąbski, however, tried to be optimistic and reported to Sapieha that the 30 million was what the Soviets "are already conceding to us today."[86]

While Dąbski was not at all quick to make concessions, Strasburger was especially "tough and unyielding," from Ioffe's perspective. When the Bolshevik hinted at the possibility of a secret agreement on some minor issue, Strasburger not only rejected the idea, but also reproached him for this attempt at "secret diplomacy," which the Soviets officially condemned as a bourgeois concept. This greatly irritated Ioffe and he complained to Dąbski that Strasburger was a bad diplomat who merely made things "difficult." He speculated that the latter's

inflexibility was caused by "careerist" considerations, namely by his unwillingness to shoulder responsibility for having yielded to the Soviets.[87]

The railroad subcommission of the financial-economic commission dealt with the issue of "reevacuation," as it was called, of Polish railroad rolling stock. The Poles claimed they should be compensated for all rolling stock evacuated by Russia from both Congress Poland and the Polish part of the Borderlands. The Soviets argued that reevacuation should involve only existing rolling stock that had belonged to state-owned railroads in Congress Poland.[88] While neither side brought forward any specific numbers yet, it was obvious that these would greatly differ.

The financial-economic commission dealt also with reevacuation of Polish private property, which encompassed local funds and other property. The funds were numerous and varied. They included, for instance, scholarship foundations worth 4 million rubles; the treasuries of cities, towns, and village communities totaling 35 million; and the funds of the Mutual Fire Insurance Association, amounting to "15 or 17 million," all according to Soviet estimates. The Bolsheviks insisted that these funds be returned in worthless Soviet paper money rather than gold rubles.[89]

The value of other property, including dozens of factories, was calculated by Polish experts at over 20 million rubles. Yet, an estimated half of the property had been used up or destroyed. The Poles held Russia responsible for the losses and demanded compensation. Ioffe argued that such compensation would amount to war reparations, which had been renounced in the preliminaries. He vowed he "can agree to reevacuation, but never to restitution."[90]

After six weeks of debates on this issue, with both sides firmly entrenched in their respective positions, Moscow suddenly instructed Ioffe to demand a deadline of one year "for identifying Polish property to be reevacuated." Ioffe deplored this instruction, arguing that it was insupportable to add suddenly an unprecedented condition which had not been included in either the preliminaries or any other Soviet peace treaty.[91]

A very thorny issue was return of treasures of Polish national culture, including archives, libraries, works of art, and relics of the past, appropriated by Russia under the former tsarist regime. In addition, there was a problem of reevacuation of treasures of Polish national culture evacuated to Russia in 1915. The preliminaries specifically stipulated that the definitive treaty ensure both return and reevacuation. In late December, however, Ioffe suddenly learned that Anatolii V. Lunacharskii, the commissar of education and culture, "does not wish to give away libraries and maps, and on that basis the Central Committee has decided that these issues cannot be resolved without" his agreement. Ioffe

protested to Moscow that "these issues have already been resolved by the preliminary treaty, ratified by the government, part of which is the Commissariat of Education and Culture." Yet, Chicherin remained unimpressed; he countered: "to all appearances, you underestimate how vast will be the blow given to our cultural life by devastating St. Petersburg's libraries and museums." To lessen the damage, only those items should be returned that actually originated in Poland. This was, Chicherin declared, "a very serious issue," causing "alarm at the Commissariat of Education and Culture and among all those who hold dear the interests of our culture."[92]

The original task of the territorial commission, headed by Wasilewski and Kviring, was to define very precisely the Polish-Soviet border as established by the preliminaries. The Poles, however, raised the issue of "rectification" of the border in the northern sector, between Dzisna and Radoszkowicze. They argued that in the preliminary peace negotiations both sides had agreed to draw the border in such a way so as to leave the entire territory of Wilno Province on its western side.[93] Yet, by mistake, the mixed commission had left the province's northeastern edge on the Soviet side. The territory involved covered over 10,000 square versts (11,200 square kilometers).[94] While Ioffe viewed the Polish request as unjustified, he nonetheless indicated that the Soviets would not be unwilling to consider changes involving a transfer of 3,000 square versts (3,400 square kilometers) to Poland. These changes, however, could not be made in the northern but rather in the central or southern sector. Most importantly, he insisted that the issue be tied with the unresolved economic questions.[95]

Somehow, Chicherin understood from Kviring's wires that "major border changes are possible on condition of compensation." He saw this as an opportunity "to raise the issue of annulment of the Polish corridor" which separated Soviet Russia from Lithuania. The chief of Soviet diplomacy well appreciated that "from the political and economic point of view our direct contact with Lithuania would be of great importance." Accordingly, he approached Lenin with a suggestion "to decide on territorial sacrifices in Volhynia in order to get back the corridor." The Politburo approved this suggestion in principle and ordered Chicherin, Trotsky, and Rakovskii to work out a concrete proposal. The threesome, however, had great difficulty hammering it out. The problem was that Volhynia was "a rich area, abundant in sugar, and to give it away would be a huge loss." An alternative would be to dispense with the region of Slutsk in the central sector, but it, too, was deemed to be "very valuable." In an effort to solve this dilemma, Rakovskii wired Ioffe with a suggestion to adopt "the border of our first variant" in the preliminary peace negotiations. While it is unclear what line precisely he meant, his apparent idea of renegotiating the whole border was

completely out of the question. Rakovskii's bizarre suggestion greatly irritated Ioffe, who complained that sending him such wires "makes no sense" at all. "I repeat once again," he exclaimed in exasperation, "the border of the preliminaries is definitive and it is necessary either to renounce the treaty or to adhere to it! The Poles want some minor 'rectifications' for a suitable compensation."[96]

Things did not go much more smoothly in the commission on the exchange of prisoners, headed by the expert Edward Zalewski and by Lorents. Here, Moscow instructed the Soviet delegation to demand ten Polish Communists for the imprisoned bishop of Minsk, Zygmunt Łoziński,[97] who, incidentally, did not want to be exchanged. The Poles naturally considered this proposal unacceptable. Ioffe reminded Moscow with some irritation that "our proposals ought not to be a priori unacceptable to the Poles."[98]

Further differences of opinion followed. For instance, Chicherin considered that "one should not hesitate to demand an exchange of criminal offenders." Ioffe, however, argued that "we ought to defend the principle of nonextraditing criminal offenders, since we know how often our past revolutionary practice was marred by abuses." He feared, apparently, that as a result of extradition all these abuses would become known to the rest of the world.[99]

One of the most important issues dealt with by the legal-political commission, headed by Lechowicz and Ganetskii, was so-called optation of citizenship. Both sides agreed that inhabitants of Soviet Russia who had earlier lived in the present territory of Poland could opt to have Polish citizenship. Chicherin urged Ioffe to work out the clauses on optation "especially carefully," to avoid any of the difficulties caused by analogous clauses in the peace treaties with Latvia and especially Estonia. Pointing out that the issue of optation had caused "a whole sea of trouble and difficulty with Estonia," he warned Ioffe that it would be "absolutely inadmissible to repeat in regard to Poles the mistakes we had made earlier, the more so because the large number of Poles [in Russia] will make all these problems even much more acute."

The problem, argued Chicherin, was that by virtue of the previous peace treaties, all those who made optation were "protected from any further diminution of property." Thus, "in comparison to the surrounding population," they found themselves "in a privileged situation," since others were "subject to requisitions of warm clothes, grain, and horses, as well as to new nationalizations, etc." Optants were not subject to all those measures, and "as a result, the population begins to take vengeance by their own means, e.g., they deprive an optant of a forage coupon for his cow [*sic*]; the mood becomes such that the most serious excesses are possible," warned Chicherin. "If, after optation, the optant's property cannot be diminished, then he must leave immediately; I can see no

other way out," he declared in exasperation. In reply, Ioffe argued vehemently that "the demand" for immediate departure of optants "is on principle contrary to our constant position and I cannot find arguments to defend such a point of view because for the last three years I have been defending the opposite, i.e., that in Russia everyone has the same rights."[100]

Faced with such opposition, Chicherin demanded that Ioffe send him a copy of every document, and make no move without his approval. Ioffe countered that the draft of the clause on optation had already been sent to him twice. "I'm not to blame if you lose it," he insisted, and reminded Chicherin how, having misplaced the original copy of the preliminary treaty, he had demanded it from the delegation.[101] Most importantly, remonstrated Ioffe, "if you think that negotiations can be conducted in such a way so that on every issue your draft ought to be received beforehand, then one needs to send to negotiations a courier who will shuttle back and forth with documents, and the representatives need to be given general directives which it is impossible ever to receive from you." Chicherin retorted that if he was unable to give timely directives, it was because of lack of "full and systematic information" from Ioffe. "We know extremely little about the course of negotiations, we grope in the dark," he complained.[102]

The drafting commission, headed by Dąbski and Ioffe, was supposed to work out final versions of agreements reached in the commissions. Ioffe complained that the drafts by the Polish delegation were "extremely detailed," sometimes even reaching the size of "a small treaty."[103] The Poles tried to be very specific so as to avoid any subsequent differences of interpretation. This approach was also preferred by Chicherin, who complained that Ioffe's "system of the vagueness of clauses is inconvenient and disadvantageous, since we are insufficiently powerful to impose the interpretations advantageous to us." At times, he even specifically instructed Ioffe "to work out these clauses especially carefully because the Poles seize on every comma and cheat."[104] Ioffe argued, however, that "sometimes, in pursuit of the main goal: agreement, it is desirable and unavoidable to formulate in such a way that the opponent believes he received agreement, while after an objective deciphering of a shrewdly formulated clause it becomes clear that this agreement is not contained in the clause. . . . Thanks to my method, we managed to sign the preliminaries by the deadline, as you required, and now in a new political situation we are able to interpret most clauses of the preliminaries to our advantage."[105] Thus, maintained Ioffe, formulating clauses "too clearly" was "a diplomatic error," not the other way around. To avoid disadvantageous interpretations, it was important "to teach our organs to interpret clauses to our advantage, and I will always formulate in such a way that this is objectively possible."[106]

The drafting commission also dealt with the issue of future mixed commissions that would work on the implementation of the definitive treaty. Inexplicably, both Chicherin and Dzerzhinskii, the head of the Cheka, assumed there would be only one such mixed commission, residing in Warsaw. Ioffe had to telephone them personally to explain that the commissions could only be established on a mutual basis. Moscow then decided that the mixed commission in Soviet Russia would be located in Rechitsa, an obscure Belarusian town on the Dnieper (see Map 6), and would have no right to send representatives to other places. Again, Ioffe had to explain to the Bolshevik leadership that he could, "of course, bring forward the said Rechitsa at the next session, but then I must accept some similar hole instead of Warsaw."[107] In any case, he argued, the Cheka's fears that the commission's stay in Moscow would be "dangerous" amounted to its "*testimonium paupertatis*."[108]

As for the mixed commission's right to send out representatives, it had already been accepted by the drafting commission, as Chicherin should have known. "I can't take back what has definitively been accepted because I'm not going to disgrace myself before the whole world," vowed Ioffe. Chicherin insisted, however, that "the Center's sending a new version of any clause, as long as the agreement has not been signed, is the most common occurrence in any negotiations the world over, and negotiators are never offended by that." Ioffe remonstrated testily that "not a single negotiator in the world would agree to continue negotiations if the Center essentially disavowed decisions already taken by him." Moscow's meddling, he complained, had not only resulted in "discrediting and compromising me as a diplomat" but, most importantly, had caused "a derangement of all the diplomatic work of recent weeks and irreparable damage to all our foreign policy in general." Soviet attempts to change the clauses already accepted would be viewed by "the whole world" as proof of "our aggressiveness and our preparation of a new invasion." "Poland's certainty that war is unavoidable" would, in turn, weaken the peace party and make the Poles "even more unyielding on the financial issues." "In the best scenario, it will lead to a delay of negotiations," warned Ioffe.[109]

Indeed, all these disagreements between him and Moscow reflected unfavorably on the course of negotiations. Viewing its meddling in negotiations as counterproductive and contradicting his carefully crafted line, Ioffe decided to "take off the agenda issues nearly resolved because one has to put on hold peace negotiations with Poland and start peace negotiations with Moscow." As a result, he pointed out to the Bolshevik leadership, "presently the negotiations are actually in a stalemate."[110]

Naturally, these conflicts did not go unnoticed by Dąbski. He reported to Sapieha, for instance, that Ioffe had suddenly canceled the session of the drafting commission scheduled for 20 December, claiming to be sick. Dąbski had the impression it was "a political sickness, having something to do with the deliberations of the [Eighth] Congress of Soviets, taking place just today in Moscow." Based on "quite reliable sources," he strongly believed that "certain circles in Russia are striving to erase the preliminaries and to make a definitive peace on an entirely new basis." While unsure how influential these circles were, he was "certain" that Ioffe opposed them.[111]

Dąbski also noticed that "the Russian side strives consciously to narrow, to Poland's detriment, the principles established in the preliminaries." He warned Ioffe he was not going to sign any definitive treaty that would narrow the preliminaries. "I would rather leave for Warsaw; let someone else deal with the issue of peace," he vowed.[112]

Ioffe took these words seriously, passed them on to Moscow, and warned against "asking too much and going to extremes." To be sure, he did "narrow" the preliminaries and did "interpret them to our advantage whenever possible"; however, he considered "inadmissible an open breach of them."[113] He insisted that "by introducing new limitations to the issues already decided by the preliminaries . . . we create . . . a completely different psychology: an assumption that we do not want to keep our previous obligations, and apprehension whether we will give anything at all." The Poles might refuse to sign a treaty they considered unacceptable. Ioffe took into account that possibility, even though he did not think it very probable. Yet, even assuming that "Poland's situation is so bad that in the end it will indeed accept everything," Warsaw could publish "the facts proving a change in our treatment of it after our position has improved," he argued. This, in turn, "will lead unavoidably to a rise in distrust toward us and to a weakening of our prestige in the eyes of the oppressed nations."

That was why Ioffe regarded Moscow's "tactics" as leading to "a defeat of our diplomatic campaign." Naturally, he would "strive to carry out all" he was ordered to do, but he declined "any responsibility" for the result of peace negotiations; indeed, he "categorically" declared: "This is not the way to conduct negotiations." Instead, he insisted, "it is necessary to deal with the matter in such a way that the narrowing of the obligations under the preliminaries be conducted imperceptibly and no one be able to find facts to substantiate reproaching us for making promises when in trouble and for reneging on these promises when out of trouble." "In our mortal struggle against imperialism we ought to preserve the snowy whiteness of our garments at all costs," he urged.[114]

Such lofty phrases, however, failed to impress the Bolshevik leadership. After all, Ioffe had a vested interest in concluding negotiations quickly and painlessly. Lenin therefore preferred to solicit advice from Iulian Leshchinskii, an influential Polish Bolshevik who was an expert with the Soviet delegation.[115] In his official "Theses on the Tactics of Peace Negotiations with Poland," Leshchinskii pointed out that "a new war because of Poland's unsatisfied interests is out of the question, since neither France nor Britain is interested in robbing Russia to Poland's advantage." Indeed, the Western Powers' attitude toward the Riga peace was "malevolent." "Within official circles of Britain and France there is more and more talk about the necessity of restraining Poland's imperialist strivings," he maintained.

At the same time, "pulling Poland out of the Entente's sphere of influence and winning it over is inconceivable in principle and in practice." Moreover, mere "neutralization of bourgeois Poland, in whole or in part, with the help of minor sops" seemed "problematic as shown by the recent experience with Latvia and Finland." These states could not "give us guarantees of strict neutrality," not to mention that in the case of Poland, those sops would have to be "major, since the scale of its needs and pretensions" could not be compared to those of Latvia or Finland. Finally, any expectation that "a separatist peace"[116] with Poland would be durable or beneficial to Russia's trade was, "again, an illusion based on misunderstanding." This was so, because "every peace with a bourgeois state is merely a breathing spell, based on the consideration of the correlation of forces at a given moment. . . . That's how durable peace with bourgeois Poland is. [Moreover,] this peace cannot give us any significant benefits in the field of trade until trade relations with the Entente and Germany have been arranged. Poland has always been a continental transit bridge between the West and the East, but now, due to its monetary-financial situation, it is unable to make any large purchases abroad. In addition, Poland cannot connect us with Germany, which has closed the border to the export of its goods to Poland."[117]

Based on these assumptions, Leshchinskii argued that "the very substantial obligations that we assumed in the preliminary treaty were dictated by the correlation of forces at the time (Wrangel, Petliura, Balakhovich, . . . plus a victorious Poland)." It was then "desirable" to stop fighting on the Polish front. The preliminary peace, although "essentially a measure of [obtaining a] breathing spell, is a factual peace" nonetheless. The Poles, who had begun a process of demobilization, would find it difficult to start a new war. Thus, the situation having changed to Soviet Russia's advantage, "we ought to strive to narrow the preliminaries," argued Leshchinskii. Soviet obligations under the

preliminaries were "so huge that we are not able to meet them due to our objective situation (crisis of industry and transport, shortage of machines and locomotives, the [immense] value of gold reserves, etc.)." Subjectively, the Soviet authorities and commissariats, being "antagonistic toward bourgeois Poland," would "sabotage" the fulfillment of those obligations. All of this "would merely lead to the Poles' quick disillusionment with our conscientiousness and, by the same token, to a fall in our world prestige in the eyes of Europe; it would create a million well-founded claims," which the Polish bourgeoisie could exploit to blame Soviet Russia for Poland's internal problems. Therefore, the Soviet "line on Poland ought to be tough but peaceful. Refraining from any further concessions (in regard to reevacuation, borders, etc.), we should at the same time refrain from military aggressiveness, as long as it is not called for by necessity. The conduct of our delegation should be tough and unyielding, yet patient and cautious. We have no need to hurry because time works in our favor."[118]

Ioffe, however, cautioned Moscow not to view Leshchinskii's theses with "too much optimism." He pointed out that "all the commissariats, having and not having anything to do with the negotiations, have now begun to worry about avoiding conflicts after the conclusion of peace; however, no one thinks about conflicts during negotiations, and the latter is more consequential. I warn that, in the pursuit of peace [that is, in an effort to avoid conflicts] after the signing of the treaty, we may fail to reach peace in the first place." Moreover, he argued, the whole difficulty was not only to make Poland sign a peace treaty "which, according to it, will give it nothing," but also to ensure that "it will not cry out that we have hurt it." Ioffe assured Moscow that his plan was to give Poland "no more than you agree to give, and yet diplomatically to create such a psychology that this will seem [to the Poles] to be very good. Presently, this plan has almost been wrecked by [our] demands for even small changes to the clauses already accepted," he complained.[119]

Chicherin, however, replied to these complaints that Ioffe exaggerated "the significance of details." The chief of Soviet diplomacy was "absolutely convinced that the Poles will not break off" negotiations because of such minor issues as "the deadline for tracking down Polish property." "If the Poles say that peace will give them nothing, that is obviously not because of [these minor issues] but because of the gold and [a] fundamental [difference in our] understandings of reevacuation." Here, however, the Soviets "cannot yield."[120]

Thus, Moscow had no intention of compromising either on these two crucial issues, since they were extremely important to the Soviets, or on the remaining issues, since the Bolshevik leadership assumed they could not be extremely important to the Poles. At the same time, Dąbski was not at all ready to

accept his utter defeat on every single issue. As a result, by late December 1920, prospects for reaching definitive peace were still very uncertain.

In the wake of the preliminary treaty, Petliura's Ukrainian and Balakhovich's Belarusian troops left the territory slated for Poland at Riga, and continued fighting the Bolsheviks, this time on their own. The Poles armed and equipped them for as long as permissible under the preliminaries. The Soviets protested against this assistance, accusing Warsaw of breaching the preliminary treaty. The Poles, in turn, pointed out Soviet breaches of the preliminaries. In the meantime, negotiations remained largely at a stalemate.

Warsaw was troubled by this impasse, especially since, according to the preliminaries, the definitive peace treaty was to include a number of important Soviet obligations to Poland. Dąbski's position as the head of the delegation weakened; indeed, Sapieha intended to send to Riga the same parliamentarians who had participated in the preliminary peace negotiations, in the hope they would be able to engineer a breakthrough. Ioffe, however, preferred to continue to deal with Dąbski, whose diplomatic skills were inferior to his own. Accordingly, he shrewdly tried to strengthen the position of his Polish counterpart by making symbolic concessions. Ioffe also wanted Moscow to curb the campaign of accusations and threats against Poland, expecting that the relieved Poles would gladly accept the minimal real concessions the Soviets were prepared to make.

Moscow, however, was unwilling to accept Ioffe's sophisticated approach, preferring a "tough and unyielding" stand across the board. Moreover, by issuing two notes on the Wilno issue, the Bolsheviks further upset the Poles, who had assumed that the preliminaries stipulated a Soviet *désintéressement* in this matter. Most importantly, Moscow instructed the Soviet delegation to introduce changes to issues already decided. Ioffe was especially frustrated by these instructions, and criticized Moscow for "asking too much and going to extremes."

Pressed by Chicherin, however, he had no choice but to adopt an unreasonably unyielding stand on all issues. Indeed, Moscow had no intention of compromising either on the most important issues, since they were so important, or on the remaining issues, since it was clear that Poland would not renew war because of them. Dąbski, however, was not prepared to capitulate on all issues. He warned Ioffe he was not going to sign a definitive treaty that would narrow the obligations assumed by the Soviets in the preliminaries. Ioffe appreciated the danger, but his hands were tied. Thus, by the end of 1920, seven weeks after the resumption of negotiations, the fate of the definitive peace treaty still hung in the balance.

CHAPTER VIII

Definitive Peace Negotiations: Crisis and Breakthrough

Lithuania and Belarus: The Soviet Dilemma

In late December 1920, the Soviets were still uncertain as to whether the definitive peace negotiations at Riga would end in success. This raised with new urgency the question of solidifying their uneasy friendship with Lithuania, which they had nearly forfeited by signing the preliminary peace with Poland. Already in November 1920, the Soviets had cautiously considered supplying Kaunas with arms. Subsequently, Ioffe's note to Dąbski of 11 December, protesting against the League of Nations' decision to send international peacekeeping forces to Wilno, was to Lithuania's liking. Now, however, the Lithuanians "very much insisted" that the Soviets send them a similar note. This would mean, as Chicherin put it, "that we consider Lithuania to have sovereignty over Wilno, and it would be a challenge" to the Polish claim on the region. The chief of Soviet diplomacy thought it "important for us to offer [Kaunas] diplomatic good offices"; at the same time, however, he feared such assistance might be to the detriment of Polish-Soviet negotiations.[1]

Ioffe cautiously approved the idea. He admitted that "any protests against Żeligowski make us return" to that campaign of threats and accusations which he thought should have stopped long ago. Nonetheless, since the damage had already been done by the note of 11 December, the proposed note would not make matters worse, provided it flowed from the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty of 12 July 1920, and the Bolsheviks assured the Poles "that we do not want to wage war." In return for the note, Moscow should demand from Lithuania a declaration that the so-called Belarusian government of Lastouski, residing at Kaunas, laid claim only to the Polish part of Belarus.[2]

Indeed, the Soviets had long been worried by Lithuania's continued support for Lastouski's government. This government was primarily anti-Polish, but, as Ioffe explained to Lenin and Chicherin, it laid "claim to all of Belarus, i.e., not just to the part passing to Poland, but also to ours." Lithuania agreed, in principle, to induce Lastouski to make the declaration requested by the Soviets, but delayed delivering on the promise.[3]

In the meantime, Żeligowski officially declared that he would abide by the Riga preliminary peace, that he had no intention to undertake any action against Soviet Russia, and that his forces did not include any troops of Balakhovich. In view of this development, Moscow decided to raise the price for issuing the requested note. Chicherin now instructed Ioffe to demand from Zaunius, the Lithuanian representative at Riga, guarantees that Kaunas would "not participate in a coalition against us." The Lithuanians delayed with a definitive response on this issue as well.[4]

Moscow decided to wait. In the meantime, the Bolsheviks tried, though somewhat hesitantly, to shore up the apparently vulnerable Soviet Belarus. Already in mid-December 1920, Moscow considered sending an official Soviet Belarusian representative to join the Riga peace conference. Chicherin reminded Minsk again that, for that to happen, a Soviet Belarusian government must first be properly established.[5] Ioffe, however, declared that a Belarusian representative was "not needed here," though he also suggested that the east Belarusian provinces of Gomel' and Mogilev, annexed to Russia in early 1919 (see Map 6), be returned to Belarus, "so that one would get something a little more like a state."[6]

Moscow took only the former advice. When, in late December, Chicherin met with the leader of Soviet Belarus, Cherviakov, they agreed that Minsk "will not participate in the Riga negotiations directly, but will be represented by [Soviet Russia], as up until now." The reason for such a decision was that "neither the international status of Belarus nor its relationship with [Soviet Russia] has yet been established." These issues were still to be discussed; Chicherin, for his part, suggested "following the Ukrainian model." Indeed, in early January 1921, Moscow decided it was "necessary" to conclude a "pact" with Belarus, "drawn up after the Ukrainian model, but with some changes." The pact was to be drawn up jointly by Cherviakov and a federal commission led by Lev Kamenev. In mid-January, a "treaty of worker-peasant alliance" was, in fact, concluded. All the important people's commissariats of Soviet Belarus, including those of War, Finance, and Foreign Trade, were formally merged with those of Soviet Russia.[7]

Thus, Minsk's political situation slowly stabilized, and Chicherin was glad to observe that, "generally, in Belarus there are no serious [guerilla] bands," with

the exception of the neutral zone along the Polish-Soviet border. These guerilla detachments owed allegiance to the Belarusian Supreme Rada, and were clandestinely financed by Poland.[8] Chicherin's intelligence indicated that Lastouski had nothing to do with the Rada. Yet, when Ioffe reproached the Poles at Riga for supporting the guerillas, they declared "that this is not the case and that the responsibility for these detachments rests with Lastouski, since a political commissar representing [his] government . . . is attached to these detachments operating in the Slutsk region." Chicherin realized, of course, that the Polish declaration aimed "at causing a quarrel between us and Lithuania"; nonetheless, he decided to check its veracity, as he had little trust in the sincerity of either Lastouski or Kaunas.[9]

Chicherin had misgivings not only because he mistrusted Lithuania but also because the note requested by Kaunas was likely to "frighten" Poland. He considered that "while it causes us no harm if they fear us, it still gives us no advantage if they discredit us in the eyes of the broad masses by wailing about our aggressiveness and our change of policy as a result of an improvement in our situation."[10] Ioffe replied to those reservations that the best solution was to follow a "combined" tactic: "to intimidate with our force" and at the same time "to talk about our love of peace." Then, "our note to Lithuania will not be amiss," provided Lastouski first made the declaration and Kaunas gave guarantees of neutrality as requested by the Soviets. Reassured by this assessment, Chicherin waited for these two statements, ready to issue the proposed note as an additional means of exerting pressure on the Polish peace delegation.[11]

The Treatment of Prisoners of War

In the meantime, the Soviets decided to apply still more pressure on the Poles by raising the issue of treatment of prisoners of war. Already in December 1920, the Bolshevik representatives in the mixed commission on prisoner exchange complained to Zalewski that Communists among Russian prisoners were singled out for particularly bad treatment. They warned that the Polish "treatment of Communist prisoners of war is considered by us an act of utmost unfriendliness." Now, Chicherin judged the time ripe for a frontal attack; accordingly, on 9 January, Ioffe presented Dąbski with an official note on the issue.[12]

The note, claiming to be based on a YMCA report of 20 October 1920, charged that the conditions in the POW camps were "inhuman." The barracks were completely unfurnished and windows had no panes. The POWs had to "sleep on the floor with neither mattress nor blanket." They suffered from "lack

of footwear and underwear, and from complete lack of clothes." Food rations were smaller than required by official Polish norms. Camp hospitals were likewise poorly furnished and medical personnel was scarce. Since there was also a shortage of medicines, the rates of sickness and mortality among the POWs were "enormous." For instance, it was estimated that all those in the Tuchola camp were certain to die within five to six months.[13] To make matters worse, the POWs were often subjected to beatings. Communists and ethnic Jews were singled out for particularly bad treatment; for example, they had no right to move freely within the camp. Ioffe ended his note by declaring, "it would not even cross my mind that Polish POWs could face similar conditions in Russia and Ukraine." If, however, the Poles would not improve the conditions under which Bolshevik POWs were kept, the Soviets would be forced to resort to repression toward Polish POWs.[14]

The Polish side could not deny that conditions in the POW camps were very difficult. Instead, they cleverly decided to focus their reply on Ioffe's claim that Polish POWs were not being kept in similar conditions. Their goal was "to overwhelm the Soviets with evidence that in Russia prisoners of war do not, at any rate, fare better than in our country."[15]

The Polish reply charged that "officers, taken prisoner, are very often shot on the spot." Those lucky enough not to have been shot were put in prisons rather than POW camps. Imprisoned officers were usually stripped of their uniforms and boots, and wore only underwear. Kept in unfurnished cells, they slept "on the floor with no mattress, blanket or pillow." Since the cells were extremely overcrowded and had neither ventilation nor proper sanitation, prisoners often fainted. As for the rank and file, they were put under constant pressure to join the Red Army. Those who refused were sent, "almost without clothes," to the Russian North. In this way, eight thousand men found themselves in the Murmansk region and five thousand men in Archangel Province where they "remain in extremely deplorable conditions and die of cold and hunger." "Extremely difficult living conditions" were also the lot of the POWs kept in Krasnoiarsk in Siberia, and of those doing "hard labor in Tula." "All POWs" were subjected to constant, and sometimes violent, interrogations by various organs, including the Cheka. Moreover, the POWs were fed "extremely poorly," usually half a pound of inferior bread and a bowl of inferior soup daily. Finally, pointed out the Polish reply, no third-party charitable organizations had access to POW camps in Soviet Russia, and even the Polish Red Cross had been permitted to assist the POWs only in December 1920. By contrast, Bolshevik POWs in Poland had been assisted by "foreign charitable organizations," including, from 10 September 1920, the Soviet Red Cross.[16]

Overall, there is no doubt that POWs in Poland were kept in very poor conditions, but it appears that conditions in Soviet Russia were even worse. It is estimated, based on archival research, that between sixteen and eighteen thousand Bolshevik POWs died in Poland, mainly from typhus and other infectious diseases.[17] No archival research has been done on the number of Polish POWs who perished in Soviet Russia, but it appears to have been of the same order.[18] Considering that the ratio of Bolshevik POWs to Polish POWs was roughly three to one,[19] the mortality rate in POW camps in Russia must have been three times higher than that in Poland.

The available specific information also suggests that the lot of POWs in Russia was worse.[20] First of all, the Bolsheviks often used POWs as forced labor in difficult or dangerous conditions, as on the Murmansk railroad or in the Donbass mines.[21] By contrast, in Poland the POWs who worked were actually better off than the rest. Working conditions were not too bad, food rations were bigger, living conditions were better, and they were paid a little money.[22] Moreover, the climate in Russia is obviously much harsher. While it was difficult even for hardy Russians to survive a winter in Tuchola without proper clothes, Poles in Murmansk, Archangel, or Siberia were completely helpless without them. Furthermore, the Soviet Red Cross representative in Poland, Stefania Sempołowska, inspected all POW camps and intervened to improve the conditions.[23] Her counterpart in Russia, Ekaterina P. Peshkova, began her activity with a three-month delay owing to Soviet red tape. It is highly unlikely that she was able to visit all POW camps, given their large number,[24] the enormous distances between them, and the deplorable condition of the railroads.

In any case, having received the Polish reply, the Soviets decided to drop the whole matter. They were obviously unable to deny the veracity of Polish data. Indeed, Polish Bolsheviks, appalled by the mistreatment of their co-nationals in Soviet POW camps, protested to Moscow "against the cruelties to which they were subjected."[25] Most importantly, the return of Latvian POWs from Russia, which had just begun, revealed to the world at large the mistreatment they had suffered in POW camps. The Latvian press began to write extensively about their plight.[26] Thus, the Soviets had nothing to gain from any further exchange of notes on this matter.

Distrust and Tension

Although the exchange of notes on prisoners of war failed to produce a clear winner, it certainly increased the unusual tension that had characterized these negotiations from the start. The mutual accusations of breaches of the preliminaries, followed by such

Soviet actions as the violent press campaign, the stern notes on the Wilno issue, and the introduction of changes to clauses already accepted, resulted in tension mounting higher and higher. Polish distrust and suspicion of the Soviets rose to unprecedented heights in late December and early January. For instance, Colonel Hempel, the co-head of the mixed armistice commission residing at Minsk, informed his Soviet counterpart, Iordanskii, that he had intelligence suggesting the Bolsheviks intended "to break off negotiations in Riga and to arrest the Polish delegation in Minsk." Upon learning of this statement, Chicherin instructed Ioffe to point out to Dąbski that such "provocative rumors" were "absurd," and that "even if [the Riga negotiations] were broken off, we would not, of course, . . . arrest the Polish delegation in Minsk."[27] It is unlikely that Dąbski was put at ease by this indirect admission that the very fate of negotiations was at question.

Chicherin did not worry about that, as he agreed with Ioffe that the Soviets should "let the Poles realize we do not fear a breakoff, since otherwise they would start blackmailing us with the threat of it." On the other hand, he argued, "we should fight any attempts at provoking doubts about our love of peace and at stimulating the notion of our alleged aggressiveness." The latter task was especially important, given that "rumors about our striving to invade now Estonia, now Latvia,[28] now Romania, and most of all, of course, Poland, have recently been spread in great abundance by French sources." Western newspapers reported Ioffe to have said: "Our situation has improved so much that we do not want peace with the Poles." This French "spreading [of] the anxiety everywhere . . . leads to the strengthening of war parties in the neighboring states and badly damages our international situation," complained Chicherin.[29]

Ioffe, for his part, observed "growing distrust within the ranks of the Polish delegation." He saw its cause as a combination of two factors. First, Paris was doing everything in its power "to cause a quarrel" between the Soviets and their neighbors; it was acting "extremely energetically and adroitly . . . to create the impression of our aggressiveness and our preparation of new invasions against all our closer and weaker neighbors." France "tells all our neighbors: Look, . . . as soon as [the Bolsheviks] have become stronger, . . . they give Poland nothing of what they promised and Ioffe openly declares that the situation has changed." The second factor, maintained Ioffe, was "our diplomatic mistakes, which I have pointed out many a time." These mistakes "make the atmosphere even tenser, and hamper negotiations even more."[30]

It is remarkable that the Polish delegation managed largely to withstand this atmosphere and retain an unprejudiced view of the situation. Dąbski assured Sapieha, "I am absolutely certain that the Bolsheviks, including Ioffe as

well as Chicherin and Lenin, are for the time being conducting a peaceful policy and sincerely desire peace with Poland." The chief military expert, Lieutenant-Colonel Matuszewski, argued that the recent Eighth Congress of Soviets had witnessed the ultimate victory of "Lenin's program of economic development of the state and of entering international relations." Therefore, one could expect that the Bolsheviks "will indeed want to get the peace actually signed." According to Dąbski, alarmist rumors that the Soviets were preparing a spring campaign against the Poles "have been completely unfounded, at least up to now." Unlike the Soviets, he maintained that these rumors were being "spread by the Russian reactionaries who are obviously interested in keeping Europe in a state of war fever, whose fatal results will be felt most of all by Poland."[31]

Ioffe tried to impress on Chicherin that the Soviets should avoid giving any basis for such rumors. It was necessary "to treat Polish negotiations with particular caution, and under no circumstances to make mistakes that could be exploited to reproach us for aggressiveness or for inadequate adherence to the principle of self-determination." Moscow, however, remained unimpressed, for it ordered Ioffe to demand that the mixed armistice commission be moved from Minsk to the obscure town of Novozybkov, in Chernigov Province (see Map 6), and that its army liaison officers be recalled. Dąbski opposed the proposed changes as impractical and having no basis in the armistice agreement. Most importantly, he argued, such changes would make a "disastrous impression in Poland, since they will arouse suspicion that the Soviet government wants to remove our officers from Minsk in order to begin concentration of its military forces against Poland." Ioffe admitted that "certain political allusions" could indeed be made but he assured Dąbski "solemnly" that "the Soviet government is not thinking about any war."[32]

While the Pole believed these assurances, he also felt that "the situation was becoming more and more tense." Both delegation heads found it sometimes difficult to withstand the tension. In mid-January, Ioffe went overboard with his "impertinences" and met with Dąbski's "categorical reply." The clash strained the Bolshevik's nerves so badly that he remained bedridden for the next three days.[33] Overall, the tense atmosphere made negotiations even more difficult as the peace conference had to make final decisions on the crucial financial issues.

The Gold Reserves Issue: Continued Stalemate

In early January 1921, negotiations "moved slowly," as Ioffe put it. The "main reason" was his quarrels with Moscow. "In the recent period I have had to conduct peace negotiations with Moscow more often than with Poland, and as a result I haven't been able to press the Poles energetically,"

he explained to Chicherin, tongue in cheek. In theory, Poland should not have been interested in delaying negotiations, in view of both the upcoming plebiscite in Upper Silesia and its worsening economic situation. Yet, he argued, the Polish representatives in the financial-economic commission, led by Strasburger, were actually delaying matters by clinging to all "Polish claims, drawn up previously in an entirely different situation, regardless of their complete hopelessness." Ioffe believed the Poles' obstinacy resulted from their "diplomatic clumsiness and political unskillfulness." At the same time, however, he offered a rather contradictory explanation. Given "our mistakes," exploited by France to "cause a quarrel" between the Soviets and their neighbors, the Poles "follow the directives of those who do not want peace, and conduct negotiations in such a way that Poland could not be blamed for pliancy." Moreover, no one among the Polish representatives in the commission wanted to "take upon himself the odium of [having made a] concession," while Dąbski, "apparently, is not influential enough to make Strasburger withdraw his claims."[34]

The explanation by Leshchinskii, the influential Bolshevik expert, was entirely different. "The Poles' extraordinary stubbornness" resulted from their "exceeding adroitness, owing to personal careerism, especially that of Strasburger." Chicherin was not sure what to make of these contradictory assessments.[35]

As far as can be gauged from Dąbski's memoirs, the Polish representatives in the financial-economic commission were acting in good faith. They thought that, on the crucial issue of the gold reserves, they had a cast-iron case. Since the preliminaries stipulated that the definitive treaty recognize Poland's active participation in the creation of Russian gold reserves, they assumed their job was simply to calculate Poland's portion, on the basis of the funds extracted from Polish territories. Being quite confident in the accuracy of their numbers, the Poles would have liked the Soviet experts to engage in a purely technical discussion on the size of the portion.

This was not, however, how the Bolsheviks saw the issue. The question of what portion of Russian gold reserves had been created from Polish sources was immaterial to them. The only question that needed to be answered was how much gold they were willing to give up in order to reach definitive peace, now that the general situation had changed in their favor. The amount was arbitrarily determined by Ioffe[36] at "around 30 million" rubles, already in mid-December. Two weeks later, Ioffe "declared to Dąbski most categorically that a larger amount is out of the question." He even announced: "If that is unacceptable, then there is nothing more to talk about at all." Since this announcement did not cause a major crisis and the Poles carried on with negotiations, Ioffe figured that "they will agree in the end."[37]

The Polish delegation, however, had no intention of capitulating. In early January, they declared to Ioffe that "in no way can they accept" the 30 million. The amount was much too low, even if they were to accept the two crucial Soviet demands that: (1) Poland be entitled only to the tax-generated part of the gold reserves; and (2) Poland's share of that part be 11 percent, reflecting the proportion of the population of Polish territories to that of the entire Russian Empire. The Poles calculated the total of tax-generated gold reserves at 437 million, 11 percent of which would make 48 million. To that amount they added 25 million of Polish gold reserves, removed from Warsaw by the Russian government in the 1840s. Poland's claim for 73 million, they argued, was "absolutely indisputable." Moreover, they had other "legitimate claims" relating to this issue, such as the demand for division of imperial old age pension funds and for return of the funds belonging to Polish savings banks.[38]

Ioffe remained unimpressed. He replied that on the issue of gold reserves the Soviets "arrive at only 22 million"; however, this amount "may be increased to 30 million." As for the other related claims, Chicherin considered them "unacceptable." The stalemate was thus complete.[39]

The impasse on gold reserves stifled the little progress that somehow could be mustered on other issues. This was due to Ioffe's peculiar approach, regarding "all issues as closely interconnected" and to be treated "as a whole."[40] Even in those commissions where differences were relatively minor, Soviet negotiators steered clear of complete agreement, and the contested issues had to be turned over to the drafting commission for final resolution. As a result, Ioffe could juggle a great number of unresolved issues, trying to overwhelm Dąbski, who was not as skilled as a negotiator.

For example, the agreement on "the repatriation of prisoners of war, civilian prisoners, hostages, refugees, and exiles," was accepted by the drafting commission in early January. Its fate was still uncertain, however, as Ioffe made it conditional on Dąbski's agreement to extend the period of notice of denunciation of the armistice. The Poles were wary of accepting this condition, arguing "that their agreement presently to the extension of that period means agreement to sign the peace treaty essentially as drafted by [the Soviets]." Ioffe, of course, realized this, which was precisely why he "insisted" on this condition. Once the Poles had made such a commitment, even indirectly, their leverage would have been diminished. Dąbski, therefore, proceeded cautiously; he agreed in principle to the extension but made it conditional "on the Soviet stand on the issues of gold and border rectification." Since Ioffe had already indicated that any border rectification was conditional on the resolution of the gold reserves issue, however, everything was back to square one. The issue was

clearly the main stumbling block which had to be overcome before anything else could be resolved.[41]

Chicherin tried to find a solution by tying the issue to that of Russian state loans. He instructed Ioffe to argue that for Poland to get a share of the reserves, it ought to assume a corresponding share of outstanding Russian state loans. The Poles protested that the preliminaries specifically defined their claim as based on Poland's active participation in the reserves' creation. Outstanding Russian state loans had nothing to do with this. Ioffe was unable to refute this argument, yet he still demanded that Poland assume "a certain proportion" of these loans. This was only a tactical demand, however, meant to be withdrawn later for an appropriate compensation. In fact, Ioffe "feared" that "a clause obliging [the Poles] to assume a certain part of the loans would not be advantageous, since it could be understood as a hint that we ourselves intend to repay the loans."[42]

Given this drawback, Ioffe came up with his own solution. To every Polish claim, the Soviets would find a "counterclaim." This was, according to Ioffe, "a peculiar way of reducing the opponent's claims to absurdity." To Dąbski it was indeed peculiar, since Soviet counterclaims were sometimes so absurd that even the Bolsheviks could not contain their laughter when presenting them. In any case, as Ioffe himself admitted, his method did "not facilitate the speeding up of negotiations."[43]

Some within the Polish delegation were not particularly worried by the stalemate. Counting on the Bolsheviks' impending demise, they contended that "the longer we delay, the better our situation will become." Roman Knoll, the chief expert of the Foreign Ministry, even maintained that "if we do not manage to conclude an advantageous peace, we should content ourselves with the preliminaries and . . . remain in the stage of 'neither war nor peace.'"

Dąbski, however, was "absolutely against this concept." He argued that Poland was interested in "the most expeditious conclusion of peace," because "every week of delay causes us incalculable political, economic, and financial harm, diminishes our prestige, and in general exposes Poland to incalculable danger." He was particularly worried by the upcoming plebiscite in Upper Silesia, an ethnically German-Polish territory abundant in coal mines and heavy industry. Poles in general felt that conclusion of definitive peace with Soviet Russia would boost their chances for a favorable outcome, as Silesians would no longer fear that their voting for Poland might involve them in the Polish-Soviet war. Dąbski feared that, conversely, an unfavorable outcome would be blamed on his inability to conclude peace quickly. Moreover, he was "entirely" convinced that "time works in the Bolsheviks' favor." He therefore strove to conclude peace "as quickly as possible," yet not at the cost of major concessions.[44]

Ioffe would have agreed with Dąbski that the stalemate was "more disadvantageous to the Poles than to us." Nonetheless, he argued, it hurt the Soviets as well, since "the international situation is changing not entirely to our advantage." It was true that, "after the defeat of Wrangel, we seemed to be strong as ever." However, "the mood has changed." The British-Soviet trade negotiations had yet to produce any result, all Russian émigré groups were becoming more active, "Piłsudski has been invited to Paris," and "France loudly promises Poland help." Indeed, the French Parliament welcomed with "a storm of applause" the government's declaration that in case of necessity, France would assist Poland against Soviet Russia. All of this, argued Ioffe, could not but affect "the mood" and perception of "the European citizen" and, consequently, of Poland's leading circles.[45]

Chicherin agreed with Ioffe's assessment. He also noticed "an unusual increase in anti-Soviet agitation in the press and radio of all countries." He meant by that, for example, news about "the imagined successes of insurgents" in various parts of Ukraine and Russia as well as "all kinds of interviews and stories by prominent travelers that are compromising to us." Moreover, he perceived "another campaign—of imputing to us aggressive intentions, troop concentrations, etc." This "campaign" was likely "linked with France's new system that can be called 'moral blockade.'" In view of this recent change in the international situation, the Soviets were vitally interested in speeding up negotiations. Faced with "the Poles' unusual stubbornness" on the gold reserves issue, Chicherin reasoned, "it would probably not hurt to give negotiations a push." He suggested that the Soviets should "assume a somewhat sharper tone and hint at the possibility of an ultimatum." This ought to be done "in such a way as to make the Poles stop and think, and at the same time not to damage [our] relations with Dąbski and others."[46]

The Soviet Note to Lithuania

In mid-January, Chicherin concluded that the proposed note to Lithuania on the Wilno issue would be "very appropriate" as a means of exerting pressure on the Poles, who displayed "striking stubbornness." "Unfortunately," as he put it, "Lithuania's connection with Lastouski and his extremely dubious and suspicious character make it difficult for us" to send such a note. Overall, "Lithuania's policy continues to be extremely ambiguous," if not insincere.[47]

A few days later, Ioffe informed Chicherin that one Golovinskii, acting on behalf of both Lastouski and the Belarusian Socialist-Revolutionaries, had offered the Soviets an alliance against the Poles. Ioffe argued, however, that it

was "not worth it" to negotiate with the Belarusians despite their "Polonophobia." They were "nationalists, striving to establish an independent Belarus in ethnographic borders. We cannot support that," he insisted. Moreover, it was "unquestionable that Lastouski and the Belarusian Socialist-Revolutionaries are connected with the insurgents who operate against us."

As for the Lithuanians, Ioffe warned "against excessively trusting" them. Accordingly, he had "demanded from Zaunius an official declaration . . . of neutrality" which, he figured, would "compromise" Kaunas "in the eyes of the Entente," thus forcing the Lithuanians to tie their fortunes to those of Soviet Russia. Zaunius, however, asked Ioffe in return to declare officially that the Soviets did not consider their obligations under the preliminaries as "*désintéressement* in Lithuanian-Polish issues." Ioffe insisted that Kaunas had to make its declaration first. Zaunius agreed and in late January a Lithuanian declaration of neutrality was drafted jointly by Ioffe and the Lithuanian diplomat, S. Rosenbaum.[48]

While Chicherin considered the draft "entirely satisfactory," Lithuania had yet to deliver on its promise to make Lastouski declare he had no quarrel with Soviet Belarus. Kaunas asked Moscow to accept, in lieu of the declaration, his letter of late December 1920 to the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, stating that his "government wants to preserve friendly relations with the Soviet Belarusian Republic." In January 1921, however, Lastouski contradicted this statement by declaring to the Estonian press that he laid definite claim to Soviet Belarus, and that he aimed at "chasing the Bolsheviks out." Chicherin faced a dilemma. On the one hand, he was bound to demand from Lithuania that it stop supporting Lastouski; "yet, on the other hand, to chase Lastouski from Kaunas means to do a service to Poland." Thus, he declared in exasperation, the whole issue amounted to "a farce."[49]

Matters became still more complicated when Rosenbaum asked Ioffe whether the Soviets would "participate in the work of the League of Nations" on the Wilno issue. Ioffe replied that Moscow would likely not cooperate with the League, but would "probably" participate in "a conference of the great powers."[50] Chicherin, however, interpreted Rosenbaum's question as an offer "simply to participate in a Polish-Lithuanian commission" on the Wilno issue. He was unwilling to accept this offer because "participation in the commission will force us to take a definite stand" and "if we take a stand sharply in favor of Lithuania, as it wants us to do, we will ruin our relations with the Poles and cause harm to [our peace] negotiations." It was possible that "in the immediate future we will be compelled to take a definite stand, for instance, in case of a breakoff of negotiations with Poland. Then, it will be another

matter," he argued. However, since "that breakoff has not yet taken place, this would be premature."[51]

A mere note to Lithuania on the Wilno issue would not have such fateful consequences; hence, Chicherin intended to proceed with it. Still, he hesitated. "If we break off because of the gold, then of course we need definitely to support Lithuania and that note will be timely," he reasoned. In case of coming to terms with the Poles, however, "it would be very inappropriate to make a step so unfavorable to Poland."[52]

In the end, the factor that prompted Chicherin to send the note was the Entente's recognition de jure of Estonia and Latvia on 26 January 1921. Lithuania, the remaining Baltic state, was conspicuously omitted. He figured the Entente intended "to compel it to conduct a policy hostile toward us. Thus, we ought to support Lithuania and satisfy its requests." Such support was "even more necessary in view of Curzon's interview recommending union of Poland and Lithuania. If Britain, the main protector of Lithuania, recommends to it union with Poland, then our diplomatic assistance to Lithuania is all the more necessary to strengthen its backbone," he reasoned. Thus, Chicherin acted with determination to prevent any rebirth of Polish federalism. Having received neither of the promised declarations, he sent Kaunas the desired note on 30 January.[53] In addition, he asked Ioffe to hand Dąbski another note protesting against the idea of sending international troops to Wilno that had recently been reconsidered by the League of Nations.[54]

Ioffe was rather upset and reproached Chicherin that, "having given us nothing, Lithuania received from you all it wanted, even though the Lithuanians are no less cheats than others." Moreover, he argued, the Entente had failed to recognize Lithuania de jure so as not to upset Warsaw "rather than to pressure" Kaunas. As for another note to Dąbski on the Wilno issue, Ioffe was cool about the idea. He admitted that, in view of "a crisis in negotiations," such a note "would serve my purpose diplomatically because presently anything that can frighten [the Poles] is fine." Yet, the basis for the note was "very questionable," since "one cannot protest to the Poles in the same way as to Lithuania, because the [Wilno] territory is recognized as either Lithuanian or Polish," and Chicherin's most recent note had "already recognized it as Lithuanian."[55]

The chief of Soviet diplomacy was not impressed, however. He argued that "according to the preliminaries, the issue of Wilno is to be resolved between Poland and Lithuania with the exclusion of any third party; therefore, the [proposed] appearance of international troops in Wilno is contrary to the preliminaries between Poland and ourselves, and Poland is obliged, just as we are, to stand in the way of these troops' appearance."[56] Consequently, Ioffe should draft

the note to Dąbski. Yet, in view of "Lithuania's double game," he was to hand it to the Pole only after the reception from Kaunas of at least the promised declaration of neutrality."[57]

Ioffe admitted on 11 February that "from the viewpoint of the tactic of negotiations, no notes frightening Poland a little are harmful, and some shift of the emphasis from financial issues to the more complicated political questions is helpful as well." There was a danger, however, that the proposed third note to Dąbski might be interpreted by "Europe" just like the previous notes; namely, that the Soviets were not merely doing "a service to Lithuania" but were preparing "ground for intervention and a possible invasion of Poland." All in all, Ioffe agreed to draft the note, but he strongly suggested that it be handed to Dąbski only after Lithuania produced both the promised declarations, rather than just one of them.[58]

In mid-February, Kaunas finally declared in writing that, as Chicherin put it, "it will observe neutrality even if the Entente promises compensation for coming out against us." The ever troublesome Lastouski also wrote the requested declaration, but it "got held up somewhere on the way." Overall, Chicherin thought it was enough to justify "sending of a note to the Entente and to the Poles."[59] Ioffe, however, was not impressed. He merely promised to draft it "as soon as I have time to write." It is indeed possible that during the critical period of negotiations, which lasted several weeks, Ioffe was so busy that he had no time to spare for other issues. Most importantly, however, he realized that "a [third] note to the Poles . . . on the Wilno issue will obviously hamper negotiations at their present stage." While Ioffe admitted that "it can be done, if really necessary," he did it with reluctance.[60]

In the end, the note was never handed to Dąbski, and the whole matter was dropped. This development took place for several reasons. First, by the end of February, the critical period of negotiations was over, and the Soviets were confident the definitive peace with Poland would be signed, after all.[61] There was thus no great need to "frighten" the Poles any more. Second, a major naval revolt broke out at Kronstadt on 28 February, forcing Moscow, as will be seen, to speed up negotiations. The note would likely delay them. Third, the Soviets learned in early March that the League of Nations had finally dropped the idea of a plebiscite in the Wilno region, and had suggested that Poland and Lithuania come to terms in direct negotiations.[62] Moscow need not fear international troops in Wilno anymore.

During the crisis of the negotiations, Dąbski must have been worried about the possibility of Soviet-Lithuanian collusion aimed at acquiring the Wilno region for Kaunas. Chicherin, for his part, made sure that the issue weighed

heavily on the Pole's mind. For instance, on 27 January he asked Ioffe to point out to Dąbski that "in diplomatic resolution of major issues that are of interest to Poland . . . the situation will be far from the same in case of Poland's agreement with us or in case of a breakoff. In regard to Wilno we can give Lithuania the most serious assistance against Poland; yet, if Poland comes to an agreement with us, we will follow a much more cautious policy so as not to be at variance with the line of agreement with Poland."[63] Dąbski did not mention this particular factor in his book, probably because, at the time of publication, Lithuania still contested Poland's authority over Wilno. There is little doubt, however, that the Wilno issue nagged him during the critical period of negotiations.

The Crisis of the Negotiations

At the negotiating table, things came to a head on 20 January. In a five-hour-long meeting, Dąbski and Ioffe struggled over the issue of Soviet obligations flowing from the active participation of Polish territories in the economic life of the former Russian Empire. The Pole argued that the tax-generated portion of Russian gold reserves was obviously much larger than the Soviet-calculated amount of 307 million.[64] The Bolshevik maintained that this amount could not be in error, since it had been determined by both "Russian science and the Commissariat of Finance." Poland's fair share of this amount was 10 percent, amounting to 30 million.[65] Dąbski could take it or leave it, as Ioffe had no intention of engaging in "scholarly discussion" as to whose calculations were more accurate. "Russia will never agree" to a higher amount, he vowed, "because the preliminaries contain only a general formula rather than a clearly stated amount of gold rubles that Poland is supposed to get." In fact, Poland should get nothing, considering that Russian gold reserves were exceeded by Russia's liabilities. However, since Ioffe "obliged himself in the preliminaries that Poland would get something, he offers the 30 million which is the highest amount that Russia can give Poland." Dąbski refused to accept this amount and broke off the meeting without proposing any date for a subsequent session. The commissions also stopped meeting. The situation was "very tense."[66]

Dąbski's attempt at giving Ioffe the silent treatment could not last very long, however. He feared that "even a momentary break in negotiations" might upset public opinion in Poland. Indeed, Warsaw newspapers dealt in detail with the issue of peace; for instance, they reported minutely on relevant discussions in the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. Dąbski complained that such detailed coverage gave the Bolsheviks insights into the tactics of the Polish delegation. "The Bolsheviks are perfectly aware of our situation," he lamented.[67]

Indeed, Ioffe reported at the time to Chicherin that "the Polish press and all the parties in the Parliament demand the speeding up of negotiations." Following the *Daily Chronicle*'s interview with Ioffe in which he shrewdly blamed the Polish delegation for delaying negotiations, the Polish press "kicked up great uproar," putting still more pressure on Dąbski. His position was made even more difficult when the press announced that "the Polish government officially declares negotiations will be over in three weeks."[68] If Dąbski applied his silent treatment for too long, it was sure to be reported by Polish newspapers, and could lead to grave consequences at home.

Ioffe, by contrast, had no similar problems, since the Bolshevik Party completely controlled the Soviet press. He even wrote unsigned articles, dutifully published in Moscow newspapers, so that he could subsequently quote them as reflecting public opinion. The Soviet press conducted an ongoing propaganda campaign in support of the Bolshevik delegation. The only problem, according to Chicherin, was that the delegation did not always send enough material to pursue the campaign with the required intensity. Now that "the crisis of the negotiations" had begun, Ioffe asked Moscow to make sure "the press and the leaders' speeches take again a rather more alarmist tone in regard to Poland."[69]

Another important factor during this period was Ioffe's poor health, as his long-standing nervous ailment had been aggravated by overwork. He announced not only to Dąbski, but also to other people, that he was "extremely tired," and must leave Riga to get some rest. He also warned that if peace negotiations continued to be deadlocked, he would have to resign because he had "no strength to work any further." Alarmed by this, Chicherin recommended that Ioffe move to a seaside resort near Riga, from which he would commute to the city "for a few hours" a day to supervise the work of the delegation. Judging by the large amount of wires and reports Ioffe continued to send to Moscow, though, Chicherin's recommendation was never implemented.[70]

Ioffe's fragile health created problems for Dąbski as well. He realized that the Bolshevik's resignation would not be good for the Polish delegation, "for—in spite of everything—he is a man who thinks realistically, and with whom, in the end, one can reach agreement." With a new head of the Soviet delegation, "one would have to, properly speaking, start the whole work anew."[71] Thus, one of the reasons Dąbski had to break the stalemate quickly was Ioffe's deteriorating health. Paradoxically, the Pole could not press him too hard, precisely in view of the Bolshevik's condition.

After two days of silence, Dąbski asked Ioffe for a new meeting. It took place on 24 January and was followed by another a week later.[72] The Polish delegation head was accompanied by Strasburger. On the eve of the meetings,

Dąbski feared that "easy concessions on the issue of gold . . . would embolden the Bolsheviks and distort the treaty." Ioffe likewise felt that "it is impossible to yield on the issue of gold because then everything will start rolling." Chicherin agreed with Ioffe that "one must not accept" the amount of 73 million which the Poles held to be "absolutely indisputable." "One must remain at the maximum of 30 million," he insisted. Moreover, the chief of Soviet diplomacy asked Ioffe to "use additional means of pressuring the Poles by pointing out that in regard to the diplomatic resolution of . . . the issues of Wilno and Silesia, the situation will be far from the same in case of Poland's agreement with us than in case of a breakoff." Ioffe should also mention a possibility of a Soviet-German alliance against Poland. Overall, he ought to impress on Dąbski that, "in Poland's general diplomatic situation, our line is of huge importance."[73]

During the meetings, Ioffe "delivered lectures" to the Poles that they "cannot get" a better peace, "and in case of war, termination of negotiations, or even a break, they will get nothing" at all. He put forward "all" his arguments, repeating them a number of times.[74] In the face of such an unyielding attitude, Dąbski lowered the claim to Russian gold reserves to 85 million rubles "in gold." Ioffe replied he had always stressed that the 30 million rubles he offered would be paid "in gold or an appropriate equivalent." The Pole claimed he had understood that 30 million would be paid in gold and any remaining amount could be paid in an equivalent.

It is unlikely Dąbski had indeed misunderstood Ioffe; rather, realizing now the amount would be much smaller than the Poles had expected, he wanted to make sure that at least 30 million would be paid in gold. This is certainly how Ioffe assessed the situation. He astutely noticed that "apparently" Dąbski and Strasburger "silently accepted the number of 30 million; but then, in a volte-face, started to argue they had never imagined" that a share of gold reserves could not be paid in gold. In reply to the Poles, the Bolshevik declared that "Russia has no gold" and therefore could pay only "3 to 4 million rubles in gold." Dąbski retorted, "Poland will never agree to such an amount."[75]

Still, it was important to establish what equivalents of gold could be used for payment. Dąbski and Strasburger preferred platinum, precious stones, foreign bonds, and money in strong foreign currencies. Ioffe indicated that Russia could spare a substantial amount of precious stones and a small amount of platinum. As a further possible equivalent the two Poles named Polish marks. Ioffe instead offered tsarist rubles and merchant ships.

Agricultural products followed. The Poles were interested in grain, flax, and raw hides. The Bolshevik declared Russia could give Poland a substantial amount of grain. Incidentally, he argued to Moscow that it was "absolutely

essential" that grain be offered; "then, in case of a breakoff," Soviet propaganda would have a "superb" slogan: "We offered grain for the people, but they wanted gold for the bankers."

Finally, concessions to operate undertakings in Russia were considered. Ioffe preferred to pay the whole amount in this way. The Polish economic experts, however, were distinctly "pessimistic" about concessions. They viewed them as "worthless," and pointed out that "foreign entrepreneurs are completely unenthusiastic about them." From the economic standpoint, exploitation of a concession in Soviet Russia was likely to involve "enormous difficulties with food supply, transport and communications, etc." From the political standpoint, Polish entrepreneurs operating concessions would be viewed by the Soviets as "foreign exploiters," which would surely reflect on relations between the two countries. The only concession in which the Poles would possibly be interested related to two specific iron mines in the Krivyi Rog region of southern Ukraine.

At the close of the meeting of 31 January, Ioffe declared that his answers with regard to equivalents were merely preliminary. The issue must be studied by specialists in Moscow who would give specific and binding answers in a few days.[76]

Chicherin's Struggle with the Moscow Specialists

Ioffe's announcement put the ball in Chicherin's court. The chief of Soviet diplomacy had struggled to get specific and binding answers to precisely such questions at least since early January.[77] His task was Herculean and the story of his efforts may be described as comedy-drama. The root of difficulty lay in the peculiar structure of the Soviet administration, which was divided into powerful *vedomstva* or departments. Each department was organized on strictly hierarchical lines, and its employees owed personal allegiance to the head. Department heads, in turn, owed allegiance to Lenin, and bitterly competed among themselves for his favor. The bottom line was that cooperation between various departments was minimal and any joint project, unless directly supervised by Lenin, was extremely difficult to coordinate.[78]

Now, the task of finding answers to Chicherin's questions involved several departments, such as the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh), the people's commissariats of Finance, Foreign Trade, Transport and Communications, and Education and Culture, and even the omnipresent Cheka.[79] Initially, Chicherin "had to enter with great difficulty into relations with separate departments one by one"; as a result, he could never get "a joint coordinated answer." Only in mid-January, at Ioffe's urging, did the Central Committee order all departments involved to send representatives to a joint meeting. Chicherin

hoped this meeting would mark the beginning of a permanent interdepartmental commission. These hopes were dashed when the representatives "simply failed to show up" for subsequent meetings. In response, he gave one of his subordinates, E. B. Pashukanis, the special task of pestering the departments in person, "since without such personal intervention it is absolutely impossible to get anything done." In turn, to get rid of the pesky Pashukanis, the Orgburo decided to remove him from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Chicherin had to plead with the Politburo to get the decision changed. Then, the representative of the VSNKh, V. P. Miliutin, left for Khar'kov without having explained matters to his deputy, "so that everything had to be started all over again." Neither was the situation made easier by "Cherviakov's protest against using Belarusian forests for Polish concessions," since the preliminaries pointed specifically to Belarus as the place for such concessions.[80]

The results of Chicherin's and Pashukanis' efforts were, at best, contradictory. For instance, there was no agreement between the representatives on the crucial issue of whether to pay in gold or equivalents. Miliutin reckoned that 3 million in gold "appeared to be the maximum amount," A. M. Lezhava of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade "declared in the most decisive manner that there is absolutely no possibility of giving Poland any gold at all," while the VSNKh as a whole argued that "the ore of Krivyi Rog is more valuable than gold" and "therefore it is better for us to pay in gold."[81]

Little wonder that Chicherin warned Ioffe that "the instructions of our economic organs" on the acceptable extent of Russia's obligations, and on the means of payment, "may appear insufficient to you." That was precisely why the chief of Soviet diplomacy insisted on sending to Riga three important specialists, A. Lomov, S. I. Liberman, and Petr L. Voikov. Once they got personally involved in the Riga negotiations, they would "no longer be able to avoid giving precise and clear answers," he reckoned.[82]

The task of sending all three to Riga was not easy, however. Initially, Liberman was not let go by the Cheka's Special Department. To overcome this obstacle, Chicherin had to enlist the support of both the Central Committee and Dzerzhinskii, the head of the Cheka. Once this was accomplished, Liberman was held up by his superior, who needed him in Moscow. Subsequently, he fell ill. To make matters worse, Lomov "categorically" refused to go without Liberman. By late February, Chicherin found himself "absolutely helpless, despite numerous appeals to Comrade Lenin," to make Lomov or Liberman go. Meanwhile, the departments "refused to give answers" to Chicherin, assuring him that all questions would be answered by the three representatives once they arrive at Riga.[83]

As is clear from all these difficulties, Ioffe rarely had sufficient basis to make rational decisions on economic issues. In view of the lack of input from the Moscow specialists, his stand on many economic questions must have been arbitrary. On the crucial issue of the gold reserves, however, he was unable to proceed without Moscow's clear instructions. As a result, the crisis continued.

Continued Crisis in Riga

Not to waste time, while awaiting the opinion of the Moscow specialists, the two delegation heads decided to deal with the issue of reevacuation of railroad rolling stock from Russia. This had already been attempted, in vain, by both the financial-economic commission and its reevacuation subcommission. The Poles argued that about two thousand locomotives, together with a corresponding quantity of passenger and freight cars, had been evacuated in 1915 from the present Polish territory into the depths of Russia. They estimated that some eighteen hundred of these locomotives were still being used by the Soviets.

The Bolsheviks, however, maintained that Poland was entitled only to the rolling stock from Congress Poland. According to their own data, nearly 1,200 locomotives, together with passenger and freight cars, were evacuated from there. Excluding war damage, 830 locomotives still remained in Russia. Ioffe, however, told the Poles that his "calculations" showed only 350 remaining. The Soviets, he insisted, were being generous. They could give Poland nothing at all, since the preliminaries stipulated that only movable property be reevacuated, and, according to Soviet internal legislation, railroads were considered immovable property.[84]

When the Poles showed his "calculations" to be obviously inaccurate, Ioffe admitted that "the Bolshevik system [of calculation] is far from perfect." Nonetheless, he insisted, he "can accept only a 'system' which arrives at the number of locomotives and cars" that suited the Soviets. At this point, Dąbski, desperate to reach agreement, lowered his claim to 509 locomotives. After some hard bargaining, Ioffe raised his number to 400. After still more haggling, he raised it to 416. Then, however, he withdrew this number, arguing that only Moscow could take a decision in this matter.

A few days later, he announced his "final number" as 300! This inexplicable reduction came as a shock to the Poles. Dąbski, "almost weeping," as Ioffe reported, declared he could not accept it. Chicherin was also surprised, since the People's Commissariat of Transport and Communications had just approved the Polish claim for 509 locomotives. He thought the cipher clerks at Riga had

been unable to decipher Moscow's wire with the approval. Ioffe explained, however, that he considered the commissariat "too soft" on this issue.[85]

The subsequent discussion on rolling stock price inflation was equally discouraging. The Poles argued that the prices of locomotives and cars had increased by 300 percent since 1914. The Bolsheviks countered that it was not a matter of an increase in the price of rolling stock, but rather of a decrease in the price of gold. When the Poles showed that such an argument made no sense, the Bolsheviks countered that the price of rolling stock had increased only by 30 percent.

During these discussions, the Polish side, according to Ioffe, was "obviously led by Strasburger; Wasilewski [the delegation's deputy head] does not even participate, while Dąbski dances to the tune of the former." Given the complete lack of agreement, it was Ioffe now who decided to play *va banque*. He declared that "either the Poles accept our final conditions or there is nothing at all to be talked about." Dąbski replied that "he must consult Warsaw." In the meantime, the commissions continued to be idle.[86]

In early February, a frustrated Dąbski complained to Premier Witos that the past two months of "theoretical discussions" in the commissions "have barely any meaning today." The Soviets "cynically" admitted they would adopt "any 'theory'" to arrive at the numbers which suited them. Negotiating with them was much more difficult than anyone in Poland likely realized: "One has to deal with an opponent who many a time laughs at his own 'arguments'; who admits he changes his stand; who sometimes retracts on the next day what he said the day before; . . . whose morality is entirely different than that of the whole world, resulting in many promises and obligations having no value, since they can be withdrawn at any time. One needs the patience of a saint to listen to the several-hour-long speeches of the [Soviet] delegates, who repeat the same thing ten times over in order to tire out the opponent and make him yield; who constantly threaten and plead; and who ultimately say they have nothing to lose and nothing to give, 'since the present Russia is naked and barefoot, and you are going to extract nothing from it.'"

Dąbski was also unhappy that the Bolsheviks "constantly complain publicly that the Polish side is delaying negotiations." This Soviet charge indeed seems to be unjust, as delays resulted simply from hard bargaining by both sides. Moreover, the Poles appear to have been slightly less unyielding. For instance, Ioffe reported to Chicherin that, on 24 January, the two delegations quarreled "for more than five hours about just one word, since the Polish delegation refused to yield and thought up all kinds of new formulations, all of which I rejected. Only late at night did the Polish delegation finally yield. That's

the technique of negotiations. The wording of one clause on reevacuation, already after having reached agreement on the question of principle and Poland's renunciation of restitution, has taken five days and nights."[87]

Dąbski also reported that Ioffe tried to impress on him and Strasburger that the political situation had changed since October 1920. According to the Bolshevik, "Russia is presently so strong that it could fail to fulfill the terms of the preliminary peace at all." The Poles should take into account that "in Russia, there is a war party which resolutely presses for breaking the preliminaries. Lenin himself, and partially also Chicherin, declare themselves with all firmness against far-reaching concessions to Poland. He, Ioffe, takes the most extreme stand for peace. While negotiating with Poland, he must at the same time conduct negotiations with Moscow to receive approval of concessions he has already made to Poland." The Bolshevik further insisted that Poland ought "not to play any games" but rather "accept the peace which he, Ioffe, gives, because it is the best peace that can be had under the circumstances, and the only possible one for Russia." The Russians felt that Poland had received too much territory in the preliminaries; in fact, even British and French diplomats had told Ioffe the same. Nonetheless, he had secured Moscow's approval to give Poland an additional 3,000 square versts (3,400 square kilometers), some of it in Volhynia, some in Polesie west of Turov, and some near the Wilja river, including the villages of Radoszkowicze and Baturyn. These territorial concessions were meant as "a personal gift to Mr. Dąbski" on condition that economic issues were resolved.[88]

Ioffe explained to Moscow that he was offering such symbolic concessions as he realized that "the situation is serious" and "a breakoff would be extremely inconvenient for us." He feared that "Dąbski will leave and cry out that he could not sign a peace which failed to fulfill the preliminaries that he (and we as well!) had signed." Ioffe also considered that "our international situation is not brilliant"; in fact, it had "undoubtedly deteriorated" in recent months. First of all, "our quarrels about trade unions" were seen by all of Europe "as the beginning of a split within our Party." Second, France continued "the campaign of discrediting us as it cried, on the one hand, about our aggressiveness and, on the other, about our internal decay." At the same time, "the bourgeois world" tried to keep Russia in "splendid isolation."

If at that moment, Ioffe argued, "Dąbski the fool comes out and starts bawling before the whole world that we have harmed them, that having gotten stronger we did not fulfill what we had promised," the consequences would be very unpleasant. Both "European workers" and "our little bourgeois neighbors" would be thrown into "confusion." The Soviets would lose, moreover,

their influence "in the arena of the oppressed classes and the arena of the oppressed nations." Indeed, feared Ioffe, "we can lose at once all that we have achieved with so much difficulty over three years of [our] peaceful offensive." Thus, in case of a breakoff, Dąbski could "incredibly undermine our international prestige and cause irreparable damage to our foreign policy."

And yet, Ioffe argued, "one cannot yield to the Poles." The "three main issues" on which the Soviets could not budge included: (1) the amount of 30 million gold rubles resulting from Poland's active participation in the former Russian Empire's economic life; (2) reevacuation of rolling stock in proportion to the length of railroads in Congress Poland and excluding the Borderlands; and (3) payment of all Soviet financial obligations to Polish subjects in Soviet paper money, rather than gold rubles.

Thus, the situation was delicate, as Ioffe was striving not to yield on these "main issues," and yet to prevent a breakoff of negotiations. He was making "every effort" so that the Poles would "not leave," "delivering lectures" for days on end that the peace he was offering was "not worse than the preliminaries." He realized, naturally, that "lectures" themselves were not enough. Therefore, he "resolutely insisted" that Moscow offer Poland payment in equivalents which would indeed "have the same value as gold." Ioffe suggested, moreover, that "on the issue of reevacuation of cultural treasures one ought not to remain as pigheaded as we have been thus far, since this issue is popular in Poland." "The situation is serious," he implored Lenin and his lieutenants, "and it is necessary to address it seriously."[89]

The Breakthrough

The Poles also realized the seriousness of the situation and strove to address it. In the face of Ioffe's refusal to budge on the gold reserves issue, the Polish delegation agreed that disagreement on that issue "must not lead to war or an ultimatum." As it was, they knew they had no choice but to accept "the low amount, and an inconvenient form of payment of the gold share." Lieutenant-Colonel Matuszewski, however, argued that such acceptance should be tied to coming to terms on "other main points of disagreement within the treaty." Otherwise, the Soviets would make no concessions on these other issues. Dąbski and Strasburger agreed with this reasoning.[90]

Yet the Polish side realized that Ioffe was not the most competent person on financial-economic issues. They thought it would be easier to break the stalemate in direct negotiations with a top-ranking Bolshevik specializing in the economy. Accordingly, in late January, the Polish minister in Berlin invited Leonid Krasin, the then commissar of foreign trade, who was on his way from

London to Moscow, to visit Warsaw "in order to discuss economic issues." A few days later, the Polish government decided to send to Riga the minister of finance, Jan Kanty Steczkowski, apparently to address Dąbski's complaint that "most often, our delegation lacks instructions, apart from very general ones."[91]

Steczkowski arrived in Riga probably around 13 February, and his impact on negotiations was very significant. According to Dąbski, he "helped determine a whole range of our economic demands" and "determined possible concessions" to the Soviets. As a result, the Polish "tactic on economic issues is now clear and well thought out." Moreover, in Dąbski's view, the minister "also made a good impression on the Bolshevik side, as they consider him a very important person." The Poles hoped that Krasin, who was unable to make the trip to Warsaw as he had to rush back to his trade negotiations in London, would meet Steczkowski in Riga. Such a meeting was also recommended by Ioffe.[92]

The minister's most important contribution may have been his approval of the idea of yielding to the Soviets on the crucial financial issues. By early February, Dąbski had started to waiver in his resolve to yield only in exchange for Soviet agreement on other issues: "Given the necessity to reach peace quickly, even certain concessions on our part are of secondary importance," he argued. Now, the minister of finance himself agreed with this reasoning, thus shouldering the burden of responsibility for making such grave concessions.

The Poles realized that Soviet-German negotiations were being conducted in Moscow at the time. To drive the point home, Chicherin asked Ioffe to point out to Dąbski that the Soviets could "play a role" on "the Silesian issue." Moreover, it was "known," he argued, "that in the summer [of 1920] Germany put out feelers regarding what position we would take on the issue of the [Danzig] corridor in case of [our] further successes against the Poles." Although the situation had changed since then, Germany had "not burned its bridges" and it would be "easy to renew these attempts at any time." Dąbski, for his part, had "no doubts" that the Germans had "tempted" the Soviets to delay the signing of the definitive peace treaty with Poland until after the plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Little wonder the Pole referred to the date of the plebiscite as "a headache." He feared that, if Poland lost the plebiscite to Germany, his inability to sign the peace prior to the vote would be seen as a factor leading to the defeat. Although, at the moment, Dąbski did not have the impression that the Soviets were intentionally delaying, he felt he had to achieve a quick breakthrough in order to conclude negotiations while they were still "more interested in coming to terms with us than with the Germans."[93]

Indeed, the Bolshevik leadership was considering pursuing an anti-Polish alliance with Germany, just as it was thinking about a similar alliance with

Lithuania. To weigh the pros and cons, however, Moscow first needed to know whether a definitive peace treaty with Poland was going to be signed. On the eve of Steczkowski's arrival in Riga, Lenin asked Ioffe this question point blank. The head of the peace delegation, however, found it difficult to give an answer "in a categorical form."

He believed that war was "out of the question," since Warsaw was both unable and unwilling to wage it. Poland found itself "on the verge of bankruptcy"; that was why "the Poles, appraising everything from the viewpoint of strengthening their currency, translate all our obligations into money and, if the money is insignificant, they consider that the peace gives them nothing, or not enough." Moreover, the Poles "hint more and more often that if the peace gives them nothing, they will go back to the old formula—'neither war nor peace.'" Ioffe was trying to "frighten" them that "in case of a breakoff, war is unavoidable."

The Polish need of gold, he argued, explained why they no longer wanted concessions, realizing that reselling them would be difficult, especially after the recent Soviet announcement that foreign entrepreneurs could bid directly for concessions. Instead, the Poles wanted payment in equivalents that could be quickly converted into gold. The purpose of Steczkowski's trip to Riga, Ioffe argued, was to ensure that they received such equivalents.

At the same time, "some of the Poles" were saying privately "that if we give 30 million in gold, then it will be possible to sign the peace in ten days." Ioffe was continuing to "declare categorically that we have no gold." In fact, however, he viewed Moscow's decision not to pay in gold as "an error." "Paying in gold is the most advantageous," he argued, since it does not require the "long and tedious" process of determining the equivalents and estimating their value. Therefore, Ioffe was in favor of paying in gold, even though "personally" he would then find himself "in an awkward position, since I have given my word of honor that we do not have it." Most importantly, the Poles would be so happy to receive gold "that the peace would likely be signed very quickly."

The bottom line was: "It is impossible to make our obligations vague and unclear," declared Ioffe. If the Bolsheviks "specifically" pointed out terms of payment and agreed to pay in "goods equivalent to gold," the Poles would likely sign the peace on Soviet terms. Moreover, if Moscow decided to pay the 30 million or "even part of it" in gold, "the chances for a quick signing of the peace would extraordinarily increase."[94]

Ioffe's assessment of the situation was essentially correct. A couple of days later, having conferred with Steczkowski and the members of the delegation, Dąbski asked his Soviet counterpart for a confidential meeting strictly one on

one, without even the secretaries.[95] The meeting lasted over five hours and its main topic was the gold reserves issue. Dąbski said he would accept 30 million rubles as flowing from Poland's active participation in the economic life of the former Russian Empire on condition that the whole amount be paid in gold. This was his "final stand."

Ioffe replied that Russia could give Poland no more than 3 million rubles in gold; the remaining amount would have to be paid in platinum and especially in precious stones. Russia had barely any gold to spare because all of it was tied by various obligations. He would ask Moscow to double-check, however, and if there was any more gold to spare, it would be all given to Poland. In any event, the Polish demand was "one of the most onerous conditions because gold is presently Russia's only means of payment" accepted abroad. Dąbski retorted that he would "absolutely not budge from 30 million in precious metal." This was a slight change to his "final stand," since it meant he would accept the payment in both gold and platinum. Ioffe replied that Moscow's answer would be brought by Krasin.

Dąbski's conditional acceptance of the amount of 30 million rubles was the crucial concession that decided the fate of the negotiations. The next day, the commissions resumed their work. In the financial-economic commission, the Bolsheviks reciprocated, as he reported, with "a number of important concessions." It was the Poles, however, who returned the favor, making the most significant concession at this stage. Namely, they agreed that private property be reevacuated insofar as it could be found. Having won a victory on this issue after "a battle lasting a month and a half," Ioffe implored Moscow to "skillfully" hide as much property as possible. "If it turns out that we possess all the evacuated property, then all [my] efforts will be in vain," he insisted.[96]

In any case, negotiations were moving ahead. The legal-political commission made rapid progress on the thorny issue of optation of citizenship, on which the Soviets had "all but refused to talk" prior to Dąbski's acceptance of the 30 million. Other commissions worked with renewed vigor. The Pole hoped that "if things go well, the agreement on repatriation will be signed within a couple of days"; this would release tension and show "to the whole world that we are making big strides toward peace."[97]

Krasin's Payment Schemes

Given that the Polish acceptance of the 30 million was conditional, the issue of means of payment was very important. During his short stay at Moscow, Krasin tried to find a solution. He agreed with Ioffe that payment in equivalents would be "impractical,"

and proposed that at least some significant part of the amount be in gold. The crux of his proposal consisted in the way the gold would be transferred to the Poles. Due to a U.S. embargo, Russia was unable to sell its gold on the American market. To beat the embargo, Poland would gradually sell Soviet gold worth 180 million rubles. It would receive it in batches, and keep for itself a small percentage of each batch. In this way the Soviet gold payment to Poland would eventually accumulate over time.[98]

In mid-February, the Central Committee approved Krasin's scheme and determined the "maximum" amount of gold that Poland would receive under this scheme at 15 million rubles. On his way back to London, Krasin was to meet at Riga with Steczkowski and secure his agreement. Moreover, given the inability of the Moscow specialists to make the trip to Riga, Chicherin hoped Krasin would be able to fill that void as well, for he was familiar with "many questions, even those that are more important."[99]

When Krasin arrived in Riga on the night of 19 February, Ioffe apprised him of the most recent developments. Dąbski had just let Ioffe "understand, in private conversations, that, regardless of the delegation's opposition, he will accept all my numbers if he receives 30 million in gold." This meant the Pole's conditional agreement to the mere three hundred locomotives as subject to reevacuation. Yet, the Central Committee's decision to give a "maximum" of 15 million in gold was sure to disappoint him and, as Ioffe put it, "to lead unavoidably, under the circumstances, to Dąbski's departure." Such an outcome would obviously entail both "enormous political disadvantages" for the Soviets and a premature end to Krasin's scheme.

Since Krasin, for his part, attached "extremely great importance" to his scheme, and believed "that the scheme alone, regardless of its diplomatic and political advantages, is already worth 30 million in gold," it was not very difficult for Ioffe to convince him. Thus, the two Bolsheviks decided jointly to disregard the decision of the Central Committee and raise the amount to be paid in gold to 30 million, provided the Poles accept both Ioffe's "numbers" and Krasin's scheme.[100]

According to the modified scheme, Poland was to gradually receive ten batches of 21 million tsarist rubles in gold coin. From each batch, gold worth 18 million was to be realized on the American market and the proceeds given to the Soviets, while the Poles would keep the remainder of the batch for their trouble. The scheme would be initiated "no later than two weeks" after the exchange of ratification documents. The Soviets were to send batches at two-week intervals, provided always that they had received the proceeds from the sale of the preceding batch. If everything went smoothly, the whole scheme would

take twenty weeks to complete. In the end, Warsaw would be in possession of 30 million rubles in gold, while Moscow would have American currency worth 180 million rubles.[101]

The expected Polish acceptance of Ioffe's "numbers" raised the question of how to discharge this obligation. The three hundred locomotives, together with the corresponding number of freight and passenger cars, were worth "over 29 million gold rubles," according to Ioffe's calculations. He knew from experience that the Commissariat of Transport and Communications had had a long-standing policy that "as long as a locomotive stands on its wheels, it cannot be returned." Unable to consult the elusive Moscow specialists, he assumed this was still the case, and the locomotives would not be returned in kind. This posed a problem of how to pay for them. Given the Soviet unwillingness to pay in gold and the Polish unwillingness to accept lumber concessions, Ioffe and Krasin decided to offer the Poles precious stones. Once again, however, payment would be made by means of a scheme: Poland would gradually receive precious stones from Moscow and realize them on world markets over a period of three years. Russia would still own the stones and must agree to every transaction, but any proceeds would go to Poland.

The meeting between Krasin and Ioffe, on the one side, and Steczkowski and Dąbski, on the other, took place on 21 February. The Bolsheviks presented the gold and precious stone schemes and Ioffe's numbers as one package. The Poles could take it or leave it. While the Soviet offer was conditional on Moscow's approval, there was "no doubt at all," as Ioffe pointed out to Lenin and his lieutenants, that it was "understood by the Poles" as the Soviet government's agreement to pay 30 million in gold. Thus, Moscow was faced with a fait accompli. Ioffe tried to mitigate that fact by emphasizing the advantages of this arbitrary solution: (1) the gold would be realized, which was "extraordinarily important"; (2) Poland would "compromise itself" as a Soviet partner in the two schemes; and (3) completion of the schemes would take up to three years, during which the Poles would not be among "our active enemies."

Steczkowski received the proposal rather favorably, although not without reservations. He was unsure whether Poland would be able to realize all the gold and precious stones. He agreed to pass the proposal to Warsaw on condition that the Soviets accept two "amendments": (1) Poland assumed no obligation to realize the gold, but merely to do its best, and, in case the scheme could not be completed within one year, the Soviets must pay the remaining amount of gold they still owed; (2) all the precious stones to be sold ought to be stored in Warsaw, rather than in Moscow. Both Ioffe and Krasin strongly recommended that the Central Committee accept these amendments.[102]

The Central Committee, however, rejected them, on the grounds that "the transformation of the gold scheme simply into a pious wish deprives it of real value, while depositing the precious stones in Poland creates a possibility of their seizure by the Poles." Indeed, argued Chicherin, were the Soviets to accept the amendments, Warsaw would find itself right away in possession of 58 million in gold and precious stones. Poland would thus get "a bonus for a breach, as it were." He further contended that "the other obligations of ours are so problematic that the hope of receiving questionable factories can hardly keep the Poles from seizing the unquestionable 58 million." To add insult to injury, Poland could use these funds to finance another "invasion of Ukraine." To avoid this danger, the gold scheme should be carried out in smaller batches than originally proposed, and the precious stones to be sold should be stored, if not in Russia, then in some neutral country. "Only under such conditions" would Moscow agree to increase the amount of gold to be paid to Poland from 15 million to 30 million.[103]

Ioffe vehemently opposed the decision of the Central Committee, insisting that "these amendments must be accepted." This would make it possible to sign the definitive peace "in a couple of weeks," despite the remaining "mass of differences" and "extraordinary difficulties." Moscow should be eager to conclude the peace, since its conditions were "significantly" more advantageous to the Soviets than expected. For example, on the gold reserves issue, his original instructions were "to bring down the Polish demand for 300 million rubles in gold to a reasonable number." Surely, he argued, "no one will say that the difference between 300 and 30 is 'reasonable'"; yet, he had managed to make the Poles accept the latter number. To bring down this number still lower was "absolutely impossible." Overall, the Poles would receive "no more than 10 percent" of what they "[honestly] estimated" to be the total of their financial-economic claims. Despite this completely one-sided result, "the decorum of fulfilling the preliminaries will be preserved." Indeed, Dąbski, in order to "defend himself, will have to defend us as well, arguing everywhere that the peace fulfills precisely the preliminaries." This was an important consideration, given that "the Soviet political horizon is steadily darkening," and in view of the anti-Soviet character of both the recent Polish-French agreement and the Polish-Romanian understanding.[104]

Furthermore, the Central Committee's fear that Poland might seize the gold and precious stones, and renew war, was based on "error" and "misunderstanding." First of all, Warsaw would find itself right away in possession of 48 million rubles rather than 58 million.[105] Most importantly, Moscow failed to see that the schemes were part of an entire peace settlement that was worth much

more than this amount. "Poland receives a relatively advantageous peace, even though it is much less than it had expected," he argued. If Warsaw "seizes those millions and wages war, it [forfeits] all our obligations, which are much greater." "They would have to go mad" to do that, he contended, "since no one can be assured of the war's outcome; not to mention that to wage war after having concluded peace is not easy in general, and absolutely impossible for Poland."

The Central Committee's specific reservations in regard to the amendment to the precious stone scheme were "also incorrect." The precious stones, even if stored in Warsaw, represented an equivalent for the rolling stock that remained in Russia. So if the Poles seized them, they would gain nothing and the Soviets would lose nothing. As for the gold, he argued, only beginning with the fifth batch would the Poles have more gold in their hands than the entire Soviet obligation of 30 million; yet, the extra amount (increasing from 3 to 18 million with each successive batch) would never be greater than the remaining Soviet obligations under the treaty. So, again, the Poles would gain nothing by seizing it, while incurring the odium for breaching the agreement in the most blatant manner. In any case, Ioffe argued, "I do not think it possible to get such terms that we give Poland neither the rolling stock nor its equivalent, while we keep both, and that we drag out the transfer of gold over a very long period of time [by making the batches smaller]."

Even "if the Central Committee itself considers all our obligations problematic," it should take into account that "Poland considers everything given to it by the peace treaty as its own, and views any schemes making payment easier for us as its special concession." In fact, he argued, the schemes benefited primarily the Soviets. The gold scheme aimed at realizing 180 million rubles worth of Soviet gold, despite the embargo. The precious stone scheme was designed to prevent a slump in prices that would naturally follow, if the Soviets, considered to be in possession of "enormous amounts" of precious stones, began to sell them on world markets by themselves.

Finally, Ioffe argued, if not for the schemes, Moscow would have to pay an advance of almost 60 million rubles[106] within two months, as it had done in the case of peace treaties with the Baltic states. Thanks to the schemes, payment of the advance would drag out for up to three years. Moreover, it would meet with various obstacles since, according to Krasin and other experts, "the ideal course of realization, foreseen in our proposal, is practically unrealizable." In addition, "the schemes, though expressed precisely and clearly, are in themselves so intricate that they can be interpreted in every way possible." If the Poles accepted them, argued Ioffe, they would, "strictly speaking receive no advance at all."[107]

For over a week, Moscow remained impervious to these arguments. Chicherin kept repeating the same reservations over and over. Ioffe marveled at this inability to comprehend his point of view, which he considered "straightforward." In desperation, he decided "to go to Moscow for personal negotiations with the Central Committee." His decision had the backing of the whole peace delegation. Yet, Chicherin vehemently opposed his trip.[108]

The situation changed sharply, however, with the outbreak of the Kronstadt revolt on 28 February. It came as a culmination of a wave of peasant revolts, industrial strikes, and naval mutinies in both Russia and Ukraine. This grave event naturally weakened the Soviet position at Riga. To control the damage, Chicherin advised Ioffe on 3 March that "the Central Committee has decided to speed up negotiations with Poland as much as possible." Accordingly, Moscow withdrew its rejection of the amendments. Instead, Chicherin asked Ioffe for ideas on how to "improve the schemes." It was "necessary to have a stand ready by the time" Warsaw gave its reply on the issue of the schemes, exhorted Chicherin.[109]

The Polish government was slow to respond to the Soviet proposal, however. It can be surmised that Warsaw, just like Dąbski, was not happy about the schemes, yet it feared the grave and unpredictable consequences of rejecting them. Ioffe, the consummate diplomat, himself declared he was "unable to foresee" what would happen in such a case.[110] The Poles must have been even more at a loss. It was very doubtful whether Russia, ruined by war and the utopian Bolshevik economic system, would be able to pay the advance of nearly 60 million rubles in commodities other than gold and precious stones, especially since in that case the payment would have to be made within two months. Not to mention that a Polish rejection would cause a considerable delay in signing the treaty—one Poland could hardly afford, given the upcoming plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Warsaw needed, moreover, to receive the advance without delay to strengthen its rapidly falling currency. Overall, the reasons for accepting the schemes appeared to be persuasive.

At the same time, they involved at least two significant difficulties. The most obvious, from the Polish point of view, was the spreading of payments over a long period of time. This problem would be alleviated, were the gold scheme to be backed up by a surety of 30 million rubles in precious stones, stored in Poland. In addition, the Poles wanted the precious stone scheme to take eighteen months, rather than three years. The other difficulty involved a moral objection to participation in realization of precious stones which the Bolsheviks had likely acquired by confiscation.[111] To ease its conscience, Warsaw decided to farm the schemes out to a private consortium, which would enjoy government guarantees.

Moreover, to minimize the risk of public and international criticism, the schemes were to be hidden in two secret annexes to the peace treaty.

The working out of these terms required considerable time, and Dąbski announced them to Ioffe as late as 11 March. The Bolshevik rejected "categorically" and out of hand the idea of any surety to back up the gold scheme. Otherwise, he judged the Polish terms to be acceptable, although he insisted that the precious stone scheme be spread over two years. He also proposed that the stones be transferred to Warsaw in batches, rather than all at one go, as the Poles required. Dąbski instantly agreed to drop the demand for a surety, while he initially rejected the transfer of the stones in batches. In the end, however, the Pole yielded also on this issue in return for a very significant shortening of the term of the precious stone scheme. As a result, the stones were to be transferred to Poland in three batches over the period of half a year.[112]

This breakthrough made it possible to reach agreement on the remaining financial-economic issues. With this, the main stumbling block to negotiations was finally removed.

The Agreement on Repatriation

Soon after Steczkowski's conditional acceptance of Krasin's schemes, Ioffe declared he no longer saw any obstacles to signing the agreement on repatriation, provided Dąbski was willing to extend the armistice denunciation notice period. The Pole agreed, and the period was extended to forty-two days.[113] The agreement was signed on 24 February, though the signing was interpreted quite differently by each side: Dąbski thought it would ease tension and show "the whole world we are making big strides toward peace," while Ioffe reasoned it would "be understood as [Polish] readiness to accept our conditions."[114]

The parties agreed to repatriate all hostages, civil prisoners, internees, prisoners of war, exiles, refugees, and émigrés; however, these people had the right to refuse to be repatriated, and their home authorities had the right not to accept them. The agreement stipulated that any legal action or punishment in regard to all these categories of people be stayed.[115] As it happened, shortly before the signing, the Cheka had "sentenced," as Chicherin put it, two Poles to death, and they were now to be executed.[116] Ioffe advised his superior that "any executions are inadmissible following the signing of the agreement." Accordingly, "pressure on the Poles should now be applied in a different way, as long as they themselves abide" by the agreement. Chicherin disagreed. He argued that the agreement stipulated "that no Pole, belonging to the categories listed in it, should remain in our prisons. Yet, these Poles can be sent from prisons not

only to Poland but also, in case of serious guilt, to the other world. This does not contradict the agreement." Ioffe was not impressed by this crude attempt at sophistry. He warned his superior: "Your interpretation is juridically incorrect, and the execution will undoubtedly cause reproaches for breaching the agreement." "I cannot imagine what answer you will give" to these reproaches, he insisted. Then, on second thoughts, the consummate diplomat tried to find a middle ground. "If the person is so dangerous that one cannot let him go, then his execution can be antedated [to before the signing] or something of the sort," he suggested helpfully.[117]

Following the signing of the agreement, each side made various humanitarian requests to the other side. For instance, the Poles renewed their efforts to make the Soviets release the body of Colonel Bolesław Mościcki.[118] Before the signing, Moscow had refused this request "for reasons unknown," as Ioffe put it. Now, the Cheka refused it on the grounds that "his relatives would wish" to go to Minsk to pick up the body, even though the Poles had never indicated any such wish. Ioffe decried the Cheka's argument as absurd, and as proof of its policy of "surrounding Russia with a Chinese wall." "One cannot refuse such a trifle," he argued. "We constantly turn to the Poles with more serious requests and they satisfy them. If we don't do anything [for them], they won't do anything for us. One must take it into account," he exclaimed in exasperation.[119]

Agreement on the Remaining Issues

In early March, while waiting for Warsaw's acceptance of Krasin's schemes, the two delegations strove to reach agreement on the few remaining issues. One was the issue of the reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures. As Dąbski reported to Sapieha, the "battle" for these treasures was "fierce." At one point, when the Pole declared he would not make "any concessions" on this issue, Ioffe replied he likewise would not make "any concessions, even if it were to lead to war." Dąbski retorted: "We are not afraid of war." The atmosphere was very tense.[120]

This crisis seems surprising, considering that the Polish Bureau at the Bolshevik Central Committee had recommended in mid-January that "proletarian Russia fully make up for the damage caused to Polish culture by the tsarist government." Moscow, in an effort to reconcile this recommendation with the demands of the Commissariat of Education and Culture, toyed with the idea of retaining Polish cultural treasures while paying an indemnity for them. Soon, however, the one and only interdepartmental meeting decided that "in view of the scarcity of gold and raw materials, we must return all the demanded cultural treasures in kind rather than buying them out."[121]

In this way, Moscow decided to return cultural treasures removed from Poland by the tsarist government. It continued, however, to make difficulties in regard to cultural treasures evacuated in 1915. Moscow apparently disagreed with Ioffe's suggestion of January "not to remain . . . pigheaded" on this issue, hence his continued unyielding stand. Why he went as far as a threat of war remains unclear. In any event, Dąbski called his bluff, and on 8 March Ioffe "capitulated all along the line and accepted our formulations," as the Pole put it.[122]

Another significant issue on which agreement was reached at the last moment related to the border. The preliminaries defined the Riga border as separating Poland from Soviet Belarus and Soviet Ukraine. In early March, however, the Bolshevik delegation suddenly realized that the Soviet part of Vitebsk Province now officially belonged to Russia. Consequently, in the very north Poland actually bordered with Russia rather than Soviet Belarus, which included only a few counties around Minsk (see Map 6). The wording of two clauses of the peace treaty, already accepted by both sides, had to be changed.

It is remarkable that Dąbski did not try to gain any advantage in return for this change, realizing as he did that the Bolsheviks feared Polish opposition on that score. He reasoned that Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus were "fictions created by the Bolsheviks to mask their all-Soviet imperialism." Possibly, Moscow intended to scrap these fictions in the future. The reduction of Soviet Belarus to the present "laughable size" seemed to indicate precisely this intention. Consequently, he argued, the definition of the border as one separating Poland from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia might be "useful in the future," when Moscow eventually dissolved the two republics. Thus, the definition of the border was changed without any Polish attempt at bargaining, which perhaps gives testimony to Dąbski's want of negotiation skills.[123]

Moscow's Attempt to Delay the Signing

Already in early February, there was a sense of urgency among the Bolshevik leadership, given the palpable deterioration in Soviet Russia's internal situation at that time. The Politburo stressed "the seriousness of the present moment and the necessity to prepare for a difficult spring."[124] Accordingly, Moscow "hurried" Ioffe "very much." Subsequently, however, "individuals connected with the German government" suggested to Viktor Kopp, the Soviet representative in Berlin, that the signing of the definitive peace with Poland be "delayed" until after the plebiscite in Upper Silesia. He then turned to Lenin, who "accepted his proposal to get some benefits from Germany in exchange."

Ioffe opposed this decision and asked Lenin to change it. First, he argued, "we have no more physical strength to conduct these negotiations."[125] Second, and more important, he had already "energetically speeded up" matters; as a result, the agreement on repatriation was scheduled to be signed tomorrow. It was, therefore, impossible "to delay imperceptibly." Indeed, "any delay will be seen as a clear change of tactics, and will provoke all kinds of old accusations that we have an understanding with Germany, etc." To avoid this difficulty, he argued, the Soviets should offer the Germans a different means of support. "The more threats we make, the more turbulent the general situation will be, the less stable Poland's situation will be, and the less willingness the voters will have to vote for Poland."[126] Two days later, on 25 February, the Central Committee followed Ioffe's suggestion and ordered Chicherin to speed up the signing.[127]

This decision was soon vindicated by the outbreak of the Kronstadt revolt on 28 February. The revolt caused Chicherin to fear that "the current cock-and-bull stories about imagined uprisings in Russia" might affect "the mood of Polish ruling circles." In reality, he assured Ioffe, there was merely "some ferment owing to fuel and food difficulties" which had led to "small incidents in Moscow and St. Petersburg" and to "the Kronstadt business, which is not at all as serious as pictured" by the Western press. Nonetheless, Western "myth-making" might affect the Poles and "make them less compliant on issues that haven't been yet decided." Therefore, urged Chicherin, "we need to speed up the matters and strive to complete negotiations and to conclude the treaty as soon as possible." Ioffe should, "of course," pursue this goal "within the bounds of acceptable conditions." This course of action had been ordered by the Central Committee.[128]

The situation changed, however, as soon as the Tenth Party Congress, opened on 8 March, revealed that the Bolsheviks were closing ranks behind their leader. Moreover, the army made steady progress in stamping out the Kronstadt revolt, and Chicherin referred to it in the past tense already on 7 March. Considering the situation back under control, Lenin again gave ear to Kopp, who continued to lobby for delaying the signing until after the Upper Silesian plebiscite. Ganetskii and Leshchinskii also argued for delaying.[129]

Ioffe was again highly critical. He argued that by now "the whole world knows the treaty is almost ready. It doesn't make any difference whether we sign it on the 17th or the 23rd; we cannot help Germany" in any case. To be sure, "the possibility of exploiting the Polish delegation's desire to sign the peace before the 20th," the date scheduled for the plebiscite, was an entirely different matter. This "could and ought to be exploited," he declared. In fact, in return for certain Polish concessions in regard to the gold scheme, Ioffe soon agreed to sign the treaty on 18 March.[130]

Chicherin was upset by this undertaking. He pointed out on 13 March that "the Central Committee has decided that in general it is necessary to sign the peace quickly; however, in this particular case the result is something unforeseen, namely a demonstrative signing, as it were, on the eve of the plebiscite." Such a signing would likely be seen in Berlin as "a demonstration of an unfavorable attitude toward Germany."[131]

Ioffe remained unimpressed. He pointed out that had he received these new instructions much earlier, he would have delayed imperceptibly; "then, the treaty would not yet be ready and we would be unable to sign it." As it was, however, the treaty was being presently printed and nothing stood in the way of signing it on the eighteenth. "Refusal to sign now will certainly be seen as collusion on our part with Germany, will hurt us in London and Paris, and will inevitably provoke all sorts of retaliation by the Poles." They would likely come up with "new demands" and "put off the signing *ad kalendas Graecas*, since after the plebiscite they will have no reason to hurry." Besides, Ioffe argued, the Germans "think they can treat us disgracefully and at the same time demand good turns from us; we need to teach them a lesson and show them in no uncertain terms that we have no intention of doing good turns for free." In any event, he had already taken a decision in this matter and to change it now would mean "a glaring demonstration of collusion on our part with Germany."[132]

Not to be deterred, Chicherin suggested that a delay be achieved through a ruse that would not incriminate the Soviets, such as a holdup at the printers, an accidental ink spill on the treaty during the signing, or a sudden bout of sickness. Ioffe, however, rejected all these suggestions as "impractical." He argued that any shady deal with the printer "will come out and cause a scandal. An overturned inkwell will only lead to having to sign anew" another one of several copies available. Finally, "my sickness will likely cause the Poles to wish to sign at my bedside." Besides, he insisted, "we will not convince even the stupidest German that we are doing him a favor by delaying the signing of the treaty till the 20th, since everyone understands that the crux is not in the signing but in the agreement." All in all, "it is necessary to sign on the 18th, and that's for the better," he concluded.[133]

The Definitive Peace

The definitive peace was indeed signed on 18 March, at 8:30 P.M. The ceremony took place in the White Chamber of the ancient Hall of the Blackheads, packed with journalists and invited guests, including the foreign minister of Latvia, Meierovics. The entire treaty was read out loud—Dąbski read its first ten clauses in Polish, Ioffe the

next ten in Russian, and Iurii M. Kotsiubinskii the remaining six in Ukrainian.[134] Kotsiubinskii was a new member of the Soviet delegation, representing Ukraine; he had recently been sent to Riga just to read the treaty, since Kviring was unable to read Ukrainian.[135]

The treaty described the peace between the two sides as "definitive, durable, honorable, and based on understanding." The border line of the preliminaries was minimally altered to give Poland an additional territory of 3,000 square versts (3,400 square kilometers). It included the two important villages of Radoszkowicze and Baturyn in the north, a forest area near Turov in the middle section of the border, and a piece of land near Iampol' in the south. In another change as compared to the preliminaries, the border was defined as one "between Poland, on the one side, and Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, on the other." The treaty confirmed that, insofar as to the west of this border there were territories contested by Poland and Lithuania, that issue was to be solved exclusively between those parties.

Poland and the Soviet state confirmed their previous assurances mutually to respect their sovereignty and refrain from any interference in their internal affairs. They also obliged themselves "not to create and not to support" organizations aiming at armed struggle against the other side or at subverting its political or social order, and organizations claiming to be governments of the whole or part of its territory. Each side was to remove such organizations from its territory.

All former citizens of the Russian Empire who lived in Poland, and in 1914 had lived in Congress Poland or the presently Polish part of the Borderlands, had the right to opt for Soviet citizenship. At the same time, all former citizens of the Russian Empire who lived in the Soviet state, and had lived in Congress Poland or the presently Polish part of the Borderlands, had the right to opt for Polish citizenship. Descendants of inhabitants of the former *Rzeczpospolita* or Commonwealth could also opt for Polish citizenship, provided they were able to prove "their obvious attachment to Polish nationality." Declarations of optation were to be made within one year after ratification of the definitive treaty, with the exception of the Caucasus and Asiatic Russia where the deadline was extended to fifteen months. Optants had the right to move to the state for which they had opted. The state in which they presently lived, however, could demand that they leave; in that case, they would have to leave within six months. When leaving, optants could take their property with them or liquidate it, as they wished.[136]

Both sides mutually agreed to ensure minority rights—the Soviet state in regard to its citizens of Polish nationality, and Poland in regard to its citizens of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nationality. Churches serving people of Polish nationality in the Soviet state were entitled to have internal autonomy

and to own property, provided these rights did not contradict state legislation. Churches serving people of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nationality in Poland enjoyed the same rights.

The parties mutually agreed not to demand war indemnities. Each side was to proclaim an amnesty in regard to political crimes and offences committed by citizens of the other side.

The Soviet state was "to return" to Poland all libraries, archaeological and archival collections, works of art, and other items of historical or cultural value that had been "removed" from the territory of the former *Rzeczpospolita* since 1772. War trophies taken by Russia on that territory between 1792 and 1918 were also to be returned. Moreover, the Soviet state was "to reevacuate" all archives, libraries, archival collections, works of art, bells, and other items of historical, cultural, or religious value, as well as scientific laboratories, instruments, and collections that had been evacuated from the present Polish territory during the Great War. All property owned by the former Russian Empire or the tsar and located on that territory became Polish state property.

Taking into account the "active participation" of Polish territories in the economic life of the former Russian Empire, the Soviet state agreed to pay Poland 30 million rubles in gold coin or bullion within a year following ratification of the treaty. Krasin's gold scheme, providing precise terms of payment, was detailed in a secret annex.[137]

The Soviet state agreed to reevacuate to Poland state-owned railroad rolling stock including 300 locomotives, 260 passenger cars, and 8,100 freight cars. The total value of this equipment was determined at 29 million gold rubles. European- or standard-gauge rolling stock, estimated at 2 million, was to be reevacuated in kind, while Russian- or wide-gauge rolling stock was to be bought out for 27 million gold rubles. Krasin's precious stone scheme was detailed in a secret annex. Russia would send to Poland precious stones worth approximately 30 million gold rubles in three batches within six months after ratification. Poland would realize them within two years, each transaction having to be approved by the Soviets. After that period, Soviet approval was no longer needed. In view of the low demand for precious stones on world markets, the treaty recognized "little likelihood that the precious stones will be realized at prices corresponding to their real value." In case the proceeds from the sale would not cover the 27 million owed, the Soviet state would make up the difference, though terms of payment remained unspecified.

The Soviet state agreed to reevacuate to Poland property owned by Polish individuals, institutions, and municipalities. The owners must make a formal request within a year after the treaty's ratification.

The Soviet state agreed "to settle accounts" in regard to funds kept in deposit in former imperial banks and credit institutions, and owned by Polish individuals, public institutions, and cultural, religious, and charitable institutions and associations. Any obligation resulting from this settling of accounts would be paid in paper money. The ruble's loss of buying power since 1915 would be partially taken into account.

The Soviet state gave Poland most-favored-nation status in regard to restitution of property lost during the Russian Revolution and Civil War. This meant that should it grant any indemnity right to any third state, Poland and its subjects would automatically receive the same right.

The two sides were to begin negotiations on a trade agreement within six weeks after exchange of ratification documents. Negotiations on consular, postal and telegraph, railroad, and health and veterinary conventions were to start as soon as possible. Mutual transit rights were given immediately to both parties with the caveat that Poland was "free to determine terms of transit" for German and Austrian goods bound for the Soviet state.[138]

The Soviet state released Poland from the obligation to pay any share of the debts of the former Russian Empire. Diplomatic relations between the two sides were to begin immediately after exchange of ratification documents. The treaty was to be ratified by each side within thirty days, and ratification documents were to be exchanged within forty-five days in Minsk.[139]

After the ceremonial reading, the treaty was signed, and speeches followed. In his speech, Dąbski emphasized that the Riga treaty was a "compromise peace" aimed at solving "all issues in a just and proper way." The two sides arrived at it after "long and painful" negotiations, filled with "numerous and unavoidable clashes." Agreement had resulted mainly from the realization by the nations involved that peace was "necessary to them and to the whole world." The Soviet delegation had helped the process by showing "good will." Its head, Ioffe, had contributed to ultimate success by his "realism, knowledge, diplomatic talent, and ability to find a compromise in the most difficult moments." The signing ought to convince the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nations that the Polish nation wanted "to live with them in peace and sincere, neighborly, and brotherly harmony."

Ioffe, in turn, emphasized in his speech that the definitive peace was based "entirely" on the preliminaries. This was proof that the Soviet state, "unlike others," remained "always and under any circumstances faithful to its principles." The peace "fully" satisfied "the vital, just, and indispensable interests of the Polish nation." The nations involved would "ensure" its durability. The signing marked the beginning of "peaceful relations" between the two sides,

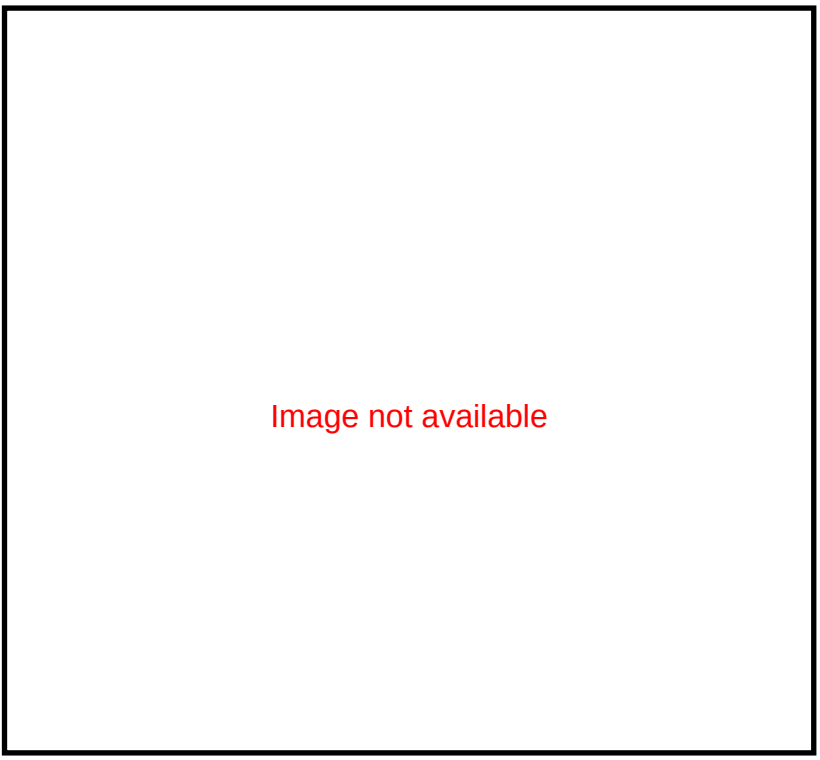

FIG. 15. Adol'f Ioffe (left) and Jan Dąbski shortly after the signing of the definitive peace treaty at Riga. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931. BN.

which should develop into "good neighborly relations." The long definitive peace negotiations had "often encountered extraordinary difficulties," especially on the financial-economic issues. Matters were "exceedingly" facilitated, however, by "the sincere desire for peace, as well as the knowledge and tact, shown by the Polish delegation and especially" by its head, Dąbski.

The difference in emphasis is worth noting. Dąbski did not even mention the preliminaries in his speech, trying to sweep under the carpet the question of whether the definitive peace followed the principles set out in October 1920. Ioffe, on the contrary, made a show of answering that question positively and emphatically.

The last speaker was Meierovics, the Latvian foreign minister. He pointed out that the peace reached in Riga had "great significance not only for Poland and Russia but also for all of Europe, and especially for Eastern Europe." The present signing, together with the signing of the British-Soviet trade agreement

on 16 March, contributed to "renewal of normal relations in Europe." Meierovics declared he believed the Riga peace "will be solid and lasting, and will bring happiness to the nations involved and to their neighbors."[140]

The signing came on a day significant to both countries. On the morning of that day, loyal Bolshevik troops managed finally to capture Kronstadt and stamp out the revolt. The day before, the Polish Parliament voted the Constitution. The long-expected plebiscite in Upper Silesia was to take place two days later.

Popular reactions to the signing on both sides of the Riga border were quite similar, though with a different twist. The Polish delegation, on its way back to Warsaw, was "greeted enthusiastically" in every town and city. Local army garrisons sent brass bands to add luster to the occasion.[141]

In Moscow, large demonstrations broke out spontaneously at the news of the impending signing. Crowds of people took to the streets with slogans: "Three cheers for peace!" "We want immediate demobilization!" "We want amnesty for deserters!" The local Red Army garrison sent troops to disperse the demonstrators.[142]

Such popular reactions may have been one of the reasons why Soviet official circles were unusually reticent about the treaty's signing and ratification. The official daily of the Bolshevik Party, *Pravda,* gave only a dry report of the signing ceremony and a brief summary of the treaty, with no comments whatsoever. Ioffe's article on "Russian-Polish Relations" was withdrawn from publication at the last minute,[143] and the paper did not even mention the treaty's ratification by the Soviets. In point of fact, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee rubber-stamped it by acclamation on 14 April, while its Ukrainian counterpart followed suit three days later.[144]

Faced with a wave of strikes and revolts caused mainly by drastic shortages of food and fuel, the Soviets turned all their attention to internal economic matters. On the eve of the signing of the peace, Lenin decided to introduce the New Economic Policy as an antidote to those difficulties. His every speech in the spring of 1921 was devoted to economic issues. Having failed to spread revolution to the West by force, Lenin expected a rejuvenated Soviet economy to achieve that feat. "Presently, our main means of influencing world revolution lays in our economic policy," he declared. "By solving that problem we will surely and finally win on an international scale. Therefore, issues of economic development are definitely attaining an exclusive significance for us."[145]

The Bolsheviks' refocusing on economic issues was possible largely thanks to the definitive peace treaty. This treaty, and the trade agreement with Great Britain, convinced Lenin that, "presently, the international situation is marked

by a certain equilibrium, though a temporary and unstable one; an equilibrium of such a kind that the imperialist states, despite all their hatred of and desire to swoop on Soviet Russia, have renounced this idea."[146] Moscow, feeling reasonably secure behind its newly established western border,[147] could turn its attention to building socialism in one country.

As for the definitive treaty itself, Ioffe considered it the best possible for the Soviets within the framework of the preliminaries. He "firmly" believed that this would be recognized, "if not presently by our Party, then in the future." The definitive treaty gave Poland, he argued, "a tenth of what it hoped to get based on the preliminaries (not demanded, but precisely hoped to get, since it demanded much more still)." In particular, Soviet financial-economic obligations were, in the end, "smaller than any of us expected." Thus, the Soviets had every reason to be very pleased with the results of the definitive peace negotiations. At the same time, he argued, "Poland receives a relatively advantageous peace."[148]

Most Polish politicians agreed with the latter assessment, as revealed by the ratification debate in Parliament. Premier Witos emphasized the "good will and moderation" of the Polish side, which consistently strove to reach peace based on "mutual understanding." A member speaking for the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee argued that the definitive treaty was "a compromise peace" which followed the principles set out in the preliminaries. Poland wanted this treaty to put an end to the "centuries-old" Polish-Russian quarrel. As for financial-economic issues, most members unhappily agreed that the treaty gave Poland "the minimum that . . . it was possible to achieve" under the circumstances. This was not a major issue, however, since they saw the Polish-Soviet border, drawn already by the preliminaries, as the main aspect of the treaty. The National Democrats were happy that the new border encompassed "territories gravitating to Poland due to their civilization and the composition of their populations."[149] Everyone agreed that, in the wake of the treaty, Poland was bound to focus entirely on developing its own statehood, rather than helping "to liberate other nations." Nonetheless, several members of various political backgrounds believed that the treaty's recognition of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus was significant. Sooner or later these two countries "must" receive genuine independence, even against Moscow's wishes. This could be a double-edged sword, however, since, as a Socialist member reminded his colleagues, the new border cut across Ukrainian and Belarusian territories.

Virtually all members of Parliament praised the treaty as an expression of Poland's independent foreign policy. Peace had been reached "by mutual agreement of the two nations," rather than due to any intervention of the League

of Nations or other powers that "speak more nobly than they act." At the same time, some members sensed that this exclusive mutuality could possibly turn out to be a liability. Indeed, members from both the Left and the Right believed that "Russia does not pay much attention to peace treaties when . . . it expects to achieve better results by using force of arms." They argued that Russia had historically shown "rapacious and imperialistic tendencies," which were unlikely to cease after the signing. Consequently, Poland should be prepared for further Soviet protests, agitation, and propaganda. Yet, the stipulations of the treaty, as one member put it, "are not guaranteed either militarily or territorially, and are based mostly on good will." Whether this would be enough to implement them was rather uncertain. This concern was amplified by the recent increase in Soviet "barbaric persecution" of the Polish population remaining east of the border, despite the guarantees included in the treaty. These reservations notwithstanding, Parliament ratified the definitive treaty by an overwhelming majority on 15 April.[150]

Ratification documents were duly exchanged in Minsk on 30 April 1921. The definitive peace treaty thus became legally binding, and both sides turned their attention to its implementation.

In January 1921, definitive peace negotiations remained still deadlocked. The most contentious issue was the Polish share of the former Imperial State Bank's gold reserves. The Poles, who had initially demanded 296 million rubles, asked now for 233 million. They also argued that their claim to at least 73 million was "absolutely indisputable." Ioffe, however, offered no more than 30 million. The task of bridging so wide a gap was extremely difficult.

Rather than make concessions, the Soviets decided to apply "additional means of pressure." Accusing Poland of mistreatment of prisoners of war, however, was not very successful, since the Poles were able to show the Bolsheviks themselves guilty of similar mistreatment.

Chicherin realized that Soviet support for Lithuania in its conflict with Poland over Wilno would be a more effective means of pressure. Yet, Lithuanian assistance to the émigré Belarusian government of Lastouski made him somewhat hesitant. Only having shored up the vulnerable Soviet Belarus, did Moscow feel confident enough to seriously consider such support. The situation was delicate, however. The Soviets wanted merely to "frighten" the Poles, in order to make them more amenable; too much support for Lithuania might have ruined Soviet relations with Poland, leading to the failure of negotiations. In the end, Chicherin did send a note to Kaunas confirming the validity of the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty which had given Wilno to Lithuania. It is difficult to

ascertain precisely the extent to which Soviet support for Lithuania "frightened" the Poles, but it seems to have been a significant factor.

The most effective means of pressure was the possibility of Soviet-German agreement. Dąbski considered it extremely important to sign the definitive peace before the upcoming plebiscite in Upper Silesia, and feared that Moscow might strike a deal with Berlin to delay the Riga negotiations. The Soviets, well aware of this Polish predicament, tried to use it to their advantage.

The Soviet use of all these "additional means of pressure" contributed to the very tense atmosphere which characterized the negotiations. Rumors about Bolshevik preparations for a new campaign against Poland circulated widely around Europe.

Things came to a head in late January, when the whole process ground to a halt. The commissions and subcommissions stopped meeting, as Dąbski and Ioffe struggled directly over the crucial issue of gold. The Pole lowered his claim to 85 million rubles in gold. The Bolshevik proposed that the 30 million he offered be paid in gold or equivalents of gold. Dąbski insisted that at least 30 million be paid in gold, and the rest in equivalents. The following discussion on possible equivalents was inconclusive, as the issue could not be resolved without the Moscow specialists.

While waiting for their opinion, the delegation heads struggled over the reevacuation of railroad rolling stock. Initially, the Poles claimed 2,000 locomotives, together with the corresponding number of cars. Dąbski lowered this to 509 hoping the Soviets, who initially offered 350 locomotives, would accept. No agreement was reached, however, since Ioffe also lowered his number to 300.

Faced with such resistance on financial-economic issues, the Poles had two options: yield or present the Bolsheviks with an ultimatum, possibly leading to renewal of war. They sensibly decided to try to trade their yielding on these issues for Soviet concessions on other issues. The finance minister, Steczkowski, who arrived in Riga in mid-February, approved the idea. At the crucial confidential meeting with Ioffe, Dąbski agreed to accept the 30 million rubles, on condition it be paid in gold. This was the breakthrough, and, as the commissions resumed their work, the Soviet delegation reciprocated by being less unyielding on other issues.

The Bolsheviks agreed to pay 30 million rubles in gold in the form of a scheme by which the Poles would gradually sell Soviet gold on the American market, keeping a certain percentage for themselves. Another scheme involved Poland in selling Soviet precious stones on world markets; the proceeds would cover the 27 million rubles representing the value of Russian-gauge railroad rolling stock which was subject to reevacuation but would remain in Russia.

The two schemes were devised by the commissar of foreign trade, Krasin, who arrived in Riga in late February. Both Warsaw and Moscow reluctantly approved the schemes.

With the financial-economic issues out of the way, progress could be achieved on other issues. The agreement on repatriation was signed on 24 February. During the following two weeks, agreement was reached on all the remaining issues, including both the important and contentious issue of return and reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures, and the issue of border rectification.

In the final stage, the Soviets tried to speed up negotiations due to their increasing internal disorder. Yet, at the last moment, Chicherin asked Ioffe to delay the signing until after the plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Ioffe refused, however, and the treaty was finally signed on 18 March 1921.

Most of the credit for the ultimate success of the definitive peace negotiations must go to the two delegation heads. Ioffe usually had a very good sense of how far he could push the Poles. He fought very hard to win as many concessions as possible, while at the same time being careful not to cross that line. He valiantly defended his approach before Moscow as it pressed crudely for overturning the preliminaries, which would have been unacceptable to the Poles. Dąbski, in turn, came to realize at some point that the Soviets were absolutely determined not to accept the preliminaries as a literal basis for their financial-economic obligations. His means of leverage being more limited than those available to the Bolsheviks, he sensibly decided to concede on these issues, while trying to win as many concessions as possible on the ones remaining. Still, this tactic might have been unsuccessful, had it not been for a wave of severe internal disturbances in Russia, forcing Moscow to adopt a somewhat more conciliatory approach. Meanwhile, Warsaw, in view of the upcoming plebiscite in Upper Silesia, was determined to clinch a deal.

Thus, it was possible at long last to reach agreement on the definitive peace treaty. It was substantially less advantageous to Poland than the preliminaries; nonetheless, the Poles were not overly disappointed, since they received a certain minimum of what they had expected, including first and foremost the desired border. For the Bolsheviks, the satisfaction deriving from their unquestioned success in the definitive peace negotiations was dimmed by the realization that, according to the treaty, the Soviet state still had numerous and significant obligations to fulfill. As is usually the case with compromise agreements, although neither side was completely happy, both could live with the outcome.

CHAPTER IX

The Implementation of the Peace Treaty

Accusations and Delays

The process of implementation of the treaty was supposed to begin immediately after the exchange of ratification documents, which took place on 30 April 1921. Instead, the exchange was followed by a barrage of mutual accusations of breaching the treaty. This barrage lasted several months, while in the meantime the Soviets put the implementation on hold.

Already in mid-April, Chicherin sent Sapieha a note charging that "counterrevolutionary bands" were being formed on Polish soil to carry out raids on Soviet territory. General Bulak-Balakhovich and "the Belarusian counterrevolutionary committee" were forming such bands in Belarus. Petliura was doing the same in Ukraine. "Polish military authorities" were not only turning a blind eye to these activities, but sometimes even offering them support.[1]

Chicherin's note was shortly followed by one from Rakovskii, in his capacity as the Ukrainian commissar of foreign affairs. The latter note was much more specific, as it accused Poland of supporting "the organization calling itself 'the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic.'" This organization resided on Polish soil, in the Galician town of Tarnów. The town also hosted the Ukrainian Press Bureau, which was spreading lies about Soviet Ukraine. The leader of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Petliura, had been received by Piłsudski. Worst of all, charged Rakovskii, "this counterrevolutionary Ukrainian organization" was forming armed "bands" on Polish territory, which operated in Soviet Ukraine.[2]

These notes were answered by Dąbski in his capacity as the deputy minister of foreign affairs. He pointed out that the obligation not to support organizations aiming at armed struggle against the other side would be in force after the exchange of ratification documents, which was yet to take place. Consequently, Soviet accusations were unjustified. In particular, Petliura's troops in Poland remained in internment, while he and his ministers had been granted political asylum. The Soviets should understand that Poland enjoyed freedom of the press, and that the Chief of State needed no advice on whom not to receive. For its part, the Polish government was "uneasy" about a number of Red Army units in Ukraine, including two infantry and two cavalry regiments, named as "Galician" and formed out of men hailing from that province. "One gets the impression," Dąbski argued, "that these units have been created for a military action against Poland." Their existence was "clearly" in breach of the preliminaries.[3]

Given that the Soviet notes were premature, it was easy to refute them. Nonetheless, it was obvious that any Polish support for anti-Bolshevik organizations after the imminent exchange of ratification documents would be in breach of the peace treaty. To avoid this difficulty, the Second Department suggested that various political organs of the Ukrainian People's Republic be ostensibly turned into "charitable organizations." Petliura himself should leave Poland, although he could return "incognito under an assumed name." Some part of the interned Ukrainian military should be preserved as "the necessary cadre for a possible future Ukrainian army." The Ukrainian "reconnaissance group," led by General Iurii Tiutiunnyk, should also be preserved and used for "espionage and, if necessary, sabotage."

This plan of action was ostensibly based on that clause of the peace treaty which stated that territories east of the Riga border belonged to "Ukraine and Belarus," while it did not mention Russia.[4] The Second Department interpreted this formulation as giving Poland an opportunity "to interfere, at the proper moment, in relations between these countries and Russia." This "proper moment" was apparently meant to be in the distant future. For the time being, the Second Department advised support for the efforts of the Russian émigré organization, led by Savinkov, in spreading the idea of Russia as a national state rather than a multinational empire. Such support should take a form that could be reconciled with the Riga treaty. In particular, any attempt of his to carry out military struggle against the Bolsheviks should not be countenanced.[5]

The ideas proposed by the Second Department became the basis for a counterproposal, worked out by the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic

and accepted by Warsaw. Accordingly, Ukrainian émigré authorities announced officially their transfer from Poland to another country. In reality, however, they remained in Poland as the Ukrainian Central Committee, ostensibly a charitable organization, which carried out its political activities clandestinely. One of the Ukrainians' primary goals was to organize a major anti-Bolshevik uprising in Soviet Ukraine.[6]

The Second Department reluctantly approved the latter enterprise. The Polish military shared the general expectation that the Bolshevik regime was not going to last for very long. In case of its collapse, they figured, "it is in our interest that the group of Ukrainian politicians which has tied its fate with Poland be the best-prepared, the fastest-acting, and have the most comprehensive means at its disposal." Moreover, in June 1921, the Second Department acquired intelligence showing that Moscow, in breach of the Riga treaty, had decided to sponsor the Ukrainian separatist movement in East Galicia. In view of this development, it was important to continue supporting Petliura. Furthermore, some of the Polish military were uneasy about Poland's abandonment of its Ukrainian allies at Riga. Piłsudski, for example, went to a Ukrainian internment camp and sincerely apologized to his former brothers in arms. Thus, the Polish military leadership apparently felt some moral obligation to continue supporting Petliura and his men in their struggle.[7]

This feeling, however, was not shared by most Polish politicians. As the ratification debate revealed, members of Parliament saw the failure of Polish federalism as resulting mainly from the lack of mass support among Ukrainians and Belarusians. The Poles had tried their best and need not to have a guilty feeling. Now that Polish federalism was the thing of the past, all members agreed that Poland must observe the Riga treaty to the letter. Accordingly, as a Socialist member exhorted, "from the moment of the ratification of the peace there must no longer be on our soil any foreign government that calls itself Russian or Ukrainian." At the same time, however, the Polish government should grant political asylum to anyone who needed it, provided they abided by Polish laws and did not act against Poland's interests.[8]

It appears that the Polish government as a whole, including the new foreign minister, Konstanty Skirmunt, adopted the line drawn by the Parliament. However, the minister of war, General Sosnkowski, and the new chief of the General Staff, General Sikorski, likely encouraged by Piłsudski, conducted their own secret policy. They tried to induce the organizations of Petliura, Savinkov, and Balakhovich to act clandestinely, so that Poland would be able to claim it was observing the letter of the Riga treaty. Yet, this goal was impossible to achieve, given especially that these organizations themselves were often lackadaisical

about keeping their activities secret and, to make matters worse, were infiltrated by highly placed Bolshevik moles.[9]

The Soviets were quick to pounce on these Polish breaches of the Riga treaty. Between early May and mid-September 1921, they issued a number of notes in this connection. They charged that Balakhovich and Petliura had formed their "counterrevolutionary bands" on Polish territory near the Riga border. Moreover, Savinkov's Russian Political Committee, characterized as "the most active among the enemies of the Russian government," resided in Warsaw and enjoyed a good working relationship with the Second Department and the War Ministry. "Counterrevolutionary bands" were formed out of interned anti-Bolshevik fighters on leave from their internment camps as hired labor. The "bands" could easily cross the border thanks to the cooperation of Cossack troops employed by the Poles to patrol it. In this way, charged the Soviets, "criminal White organizations remaining on Polish territory carry out destructive activity against Russia with the assistance of some Polish organs."[10]

Faced with such a frontal attack, the Poles were quick to reply in kind. Their notes accused the Soviets of direct breaches of the Riga treaty. They charged that Zakordot or the Foreign Department of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Central Committee had been guilty of acts of sabotage in West Volhynia and East Galicia. Soviet military units in Ukraine were preparing for crossing the border to stage an "uprising" in East Galicia. Not to be outdone, the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Western Front in Smolensk had created a sabotage network in Polish Belarus. By July 1921, about three hundred Bolshevik agitators, specially prepared in the propaganda center in Uman', had managed to infiltrate Poland's Borderlands, where they spread printed material calling for the region's inclusion into the Soviet state. To crown it all, Red Army troops had carried out raids on localities on the Polish side of the border.[11]

Overall, both sides were apparently guilty of similar breaches of the treaty. The Polish military leadership likely assumed that these breaches canceled themselves out, and they therefore ought not to be an obstacle to the treaty's implementation. Since, however, the treaty consisted mainly of Soviet obligations to Poland, Moscow was determined to use every possible pretext to delay its implementation. It identified two issues that could serve this purpose—Polish continued support for Savinkov, Petliura, and Balakhovich, as well as Polish delays in exchanging regular diplomatic representatives.

A few days before the signing of the Riga treaty, both sides had considered the issue of diplomatic representation. The Poles took the initiative, asking Ioffe to become the Soviet representative in Warsaw. He refused, however, likely because such a post did not satisfy his political ambitions. Instead, he

recommended Obolenskii, his deputy and the co-head of the crucial financial-economic commission. Dąbski liked this candidature and promised to ask Warsaw for its acceptance. At the same time, he broached the idea of Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz as the Polish representative in Moscow. The latter was an old Socialist known personally to many a Bolshevik, and the Poles thought this should make him acceptable to the Soviets. Ioffe, indeed, gave a preliminary approval.[12]

However, in early April, the Politburo began having second thoughts about the candidature of Obolenskii. After some debate, it resolved to replace him by Lev M. Karakhan, the deputy commissar of foreign affairs himself. Obolenskii was appointed head of the Soviet delegation to the mixed commission for settlement of accounts. Indeed, as the former co-head of the financial-economic commission during peace negotiations, he was clearly the best candidate for that important post.[13]

At the same time, the Soviets' willingness to send Karakhan to Warsaw was an indication of the great significance they attached to their relations with Poland. He was Chicherin's right-hand man, specializing in organizational and technical issues. The chief of Soviet diplomacy asserted that they understood each other without words, and praised "his healthy common sense and his remarkable feeling for politics."[14]

The Poles, though surprised by this change, accepted Karakhan's candidature. They were even more surprised, however, when the Soviets turned down the candidature of Jodko-Narkiewicz. His rejection caused a delay on the Polish side, since finding a candidate acceptable to the Bolsheviks was clearly a difficult task. In the end, the Poles chose Ludwik Darowski, who, as deputy foreign minister—a post analogous to Karakhan's—was unlikely to be turned down. The Soviets indeed accepted his candidature, but a ministerial crisis intervened before he could be officially appointed. The crisis began on 12 May, with the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee expressing its lack of confidence in Sapieha, and ended with the appointment of the new foreign minister, Konstanty Skirmunt, on 11 June. In the meantime, Chicherin accused the Poles of "ill will." In his note of 19 May, he also declared that "the Russian government considers the reestablishment of diplomatic relations as a preliminary condition of the implementation" of the Riga treaty. Such a declaration was surprising because, in point of fact, the treaty did not set any preliminary conditions to its implementation. It was also difficult to explain why Chicherin used the word "reestablishment" rather than simply "establishment."[15]

Soon thereafter, Witos was forced to reshuffle his government again, and Darowski was appointed minister of labor. Consequently, his appointment as

chargé d'affaires in Moscow was no longer possible. Impatient, Chicherin declared he would send Karakhan to Warsaw unilaterally. The Poles, however, pointed out that an exchange of diplomatic representatives could only be a mutual act. This was a clever move, as it practically ensured the Soviets would accept the next Polish candidate to avoid a further delay in Karakhan's installation in Warsaw.[16]

Having thus gained a virtually free hand, the Poles picked Tytus Filipowicz, a diplomat uniquely familiar with the Bolshevik system, as he had spent nine months in Soviet prisons. The Soviets accepted him in a matter of days. It took the Polish authorities much longer to officially appoint him, however, as that required the signatures of both the premier and the Chief of State. In this case, a democratic bureaucracy acted more slowly than a totalitarian one. Filipowicz, moreover, was at the time counselor with the Polish legation in Paris, so he first needed to be recalled. Chicherin again accused the Poles of bad will and repeated, in his note of 10 July, that until "the reestablishment" of diplomatic relations the Soviets would continue to block the implementation of the treaty, "with the exception of the issue of repatriation" and "some aspects of the issue of the border."[17]

The Poles had no great incentive to hurry with an exchange of representatives, after they learned in late June 1921 that it was precisely Karakhan who had lobbied the Soviet leadership for "immediate support" of the East Galician separatist movement. They feared that after his arrival in Warsaw, he would actively support that movement from within Poland. Further delay was caused in acquiring suitable lodgings for the Soviet legation, since Warsaw property owners boycotted such a purchase. In the end, when Karakhan and his legation arrived on 3 August, the Poles put them up in a hotel.[18]

The installation of both legations did not put an end to controversy or further delays. It had initially been agreed that the legation heads would have the status of chargé d'affaires. Now, Karakhan suddenly insisted on being treated as minister plenipotentiary. Accordingly, he demanded that his credentials be received by the Chief of State rather than the foreign minister, which Piłsudski refused. After protracted negotiations, a compromise formula was worked out: Karakhan presented his credentials to the foreign minister, who then passed them to the Chief of State. By then, it was early September 1921.[19]

Chicherin could be very pleased with this result. He had managed to delay the treaty's implementation by several months, while credibly blaming the Poles. Having exhausted all avenues of delaying on the issue of diplomatic relations, he now switched back to the issue of Polish support for Savinkov and Petliura. Accordingly, on 6 September, he gave an interview to *L'Humanité,* the

French Communist newspaper, declaring that Soviet Russia would not implement the Riga treaty so long as Poland continued to support these anti-Bolshevik leaders.

Three days later, Chicherin handed Filipowicz a note to the same effect. The note referred to the previous Soviet demand that a mixed commission make a list of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian anti-Bolshevik activists who were to be "chased from Polish territory." Chicherin slightly toned down this unprecedented demand, declaring Moscow "willing to accept any kind of plan that would achieve that goal." The bottom line was that foreign anti-Bolshevik activists must be removed from Poland in order for the Soviets to begin implementing the treaty.[20]

The note had an effect quite different than intended. To the Polish legation in Moscow, it was the last straw. They were exasperated by the fact that, six months after signing the treaty, its implementation had not yet begun on most issues and was being delayed on the remaining issues. For instance, about three thousand Polish hostages and internees, including several diplomats, remained still imprisoned, even though they should have been freed immediately after the signing. Moreover, the Polish delegations to the mixed reevacuation commission and the mixed special commission had been staying for a month in the train that had brought them to Moscow, since the Soviet hosts had no lodgings for them. All these highly paid and qualified experts and officials remained idle because their Soviet counterparts were not ready to meet them. The legation was helpless because, as Roman Knoll, the legation counselor, pointed out, the Poles had barely any means to make the Soviets observe the treaty. "Likely the only way of exerting pressure on the Soviets," he argued, "would be a threat of breaking off diplomatic relations, since they are so important to them."[21]

This advice was taken by Filipowicz, who suddenly, in view of the fall of the Witos government on 13 September, found himself in a position to conduct, for a moment, his own policy. He cleverly seized on Chicherin's statement that Moscow was loyally observing the Riga treaty and was ready to rectify any deficiencies in this respect. The Polish government, Filipowicz claimed, "in its desire to avoid at any cost not only war, but even any worsening of relations," demanded that, by 1 October, the Soviets do the following: (1) repatriate all Polish POWs, hostages, internees, and civil prisoners;[22] (2) pay the first two installments, originally due on 1 July and 1 September, of the 27 million rubles representing the value of Polish rolling stock that was subject to reevacuation but would remain in Russia; and (3) form Soviet delegations to the mixed reevacuation and the mixed special commissions.[23] Carrying out of these desiderata was essential for the continuation of diplomatic relations, "since in the present state of things, relations

between Poland and Russia fail to fulfill their main task, which is the implementation of the treaty." Finally, Filipowicz declared Warsaw to be ready to talk with Karakhan about taking, on a mutual basis, "further steps against crossing the border" by elements undesirable in each of the two countries.[24]

Finding it difficult to force the Polish legation onto the defensive, Chicherin decided to wait for the new Polish government to be formed. Once the new premier, Antoni Ponikowski, formed it on 20 September, the chief of Soviet diplomacy sent Filipowicz a formal reply. The note promised, essentially, to accept the Polish "demands" in return for Polish acceptance of the following Soviet "demands": (1) individuals involved in organizing "bandit and counterrevolutionary incursions" on Soviet territory were to be removed from Poland; (2) individuals participating in these incursions were to be brought to justice; (3) any interned Russian counterrevolutionaries were to be removed from Poland's border regions; (4) Cossack troops were to be released from the Polish border patrol service; and (5) the issue of "guilt" of Polish Army officers was to be discussed by Karakhan and the Polish Foreign Ministry.[25]

To Chicherin's apparent relief, his note was answered by Warsaw rather than by Filipowicz. Its tone was conciliatory; most importantly, Warsaw declared itself willing to satisfy the Soviet demand to remove certain foreigners from Poland, "as long as it receives convincing proof that these individuals, abusing their right to asylum, carry out actions" against the Soviet state in contradiction to the peace treaty.[26]

The Polish note set the stage for negotiations between Karakhan and Dąbski. The week-long negotiations ended on 7 October with the signing of a secret protocol. It contained two major stipulations. First, the reevacuation commission and the special commission were to meet for the first time on 8 October. Savinkov and several of his associates were to leave Polish territory by the same date. Second, Petliura, Tiutiunnyk, and two of their associates, along with Bulak-Balakhovich, were to leave Poland on 20 October. By then, the Soviets were to have paid 10 million rubles as the first installment of the 27 million rolling stock compensation.[27]

For Moscow, the agreement was a significant diplomatic success, as it both confirmed Poland's breaches of the Riga treaty and forced it to completely abandon its allies. Polish public opinion was upset for precisely these reasons, and it caused a great storm in the Polish press and the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. Critics charged that the government had committed a double error. First, it should have prevented the foreigners from engaging in activities in breach of the Riga treaty; failing that, however, it should not have caved in to Soviet pressure and denied them the right of asylum. Their role in Poland was

comparable to that of Polish Communists in Moscow, and by targeting only the former, the agreement was inequitable. In face of such criticism, Dąbski resigned from the government, and his political career suffered a blow from which it never fully recovered.[28]

In the meantime, the Polish government found it easier to sign the protocol than to precisely fulfill it. It was politically impossible simply to chase the former allies out of the country. All that Warsaw could do was to ask them to leave "voluntarily." This was done in a rather awkward manner in regard to Savinkov and his associates; as a result, they left Poland as late as 30 October. Bulak-Balakhovich opted for Polish citizenship; consequently, Warsaw let him stay, as it no longer considered him a foreigner. Petliura remained secretly in Poland until the end of 1923, while his associates left immediately.[29]

Tiutiunnyk left Poland in a rather peculiar manner: with some help from the Second Department, he organized a detachment of about a thousand men, which he led into Soviet Ukraine in the hope of staging an uprising. His forces, however, were soon defeated by the Bolsheviks.[30] Karakhan and Rakovskii duly protested, but this time Moscow did not make a major issue of it. Instead, it continued to respond in kind: its "guerilla" detachments in Poland consisted of regular Red Army soldiers disguised as local Belarusian peasants. The whole scheme was worked out by E. M. Sklianskii, the deputy commissar of war, and approved by the Politburo. Lenin, in particular, praised it as a "beautiful plan" and offered these quasi-guerillas a bounty of 100,000 rubles for each hanged kulak, Orthodox priest, and landowner.[31]

Moscow had important reasons for toning down its diplomatic protests against Polish breaches of the treaty. Unable to cope with the devastating famine in the Volga region, the Soviets asked for international assistance in August 1921. Poland, among several "bourgeois" countries, responded to that appeal. The Poles also helped the Bolsheviks in battling the cattle plague that affected the Soviet state in the fall of 1921. In this context, the usual violent accusations and threats would have been counterproductive.[32]

Even more important was the political fallout of Filipowicz's note, as it pointed out the numerous Soviet breaches of the treaty. Warsaw had cleverly made the note known to other governments, which was very inconvenient to the Soviets, who had been hinting at the possibility of repaying Russia's foreign debts and planned to participate in the upcoming Washington conference. Under the circumstances, Moscow had no choice but to do its best to make the impression of a reliable business partner. Accordingly, on 1 November, two days after Savinkov and his group left Poland, the Soviets paid the first installment of 10 million rubles as required by the Karakhan-Dąbski agreement.[33]

Thus, the Karakhan-Dąbski agreement effectively ended the initial delay in the implementation of the Riga treaty. Mixed commissions began to meet and even produce some results.

Repatriation

Unlike most issues related to implementation, repatriation began with merely a modest delay. According to the agreement, signed on 24 February 1921, repatriation was supposed to begin within ten days. In practice, the first transports of prisoners of war were exchanged in mid-March. The agreement stipulated that POWs be repatriated first, followed by hostages, internees, and civil prisoners, while optants were to be repatriated last. All these people were to be transported by train along two major railroad lines. The Baranowicze—Minsk line handled most of the traffic, as this facilitated repatriation between both Soviet Russia and Soviet Belarus, and Poland. The Równe—Shepetovka line was a secondary route, used for repatriation between Soviet Ukraine and Poland. Each side, the Polish and the Soviet, was obliged to repatriate weekly no fewer than four thousand people, including at least fifteen hundred POWs.[34]

Two mixed repatriation commissions were created in late April 1921. The commission in Warsaw was headed jointly by Stanisław Korsak, on the Polish side, and E. N. Ignatov, on the Soviet side. The commission in Moscow was led, respectively, by A. Zieleziński and A. Iastrebov. The Warsaw commission had a relatively easy task of supervision over repatriation of Bolshevik POWs kept in several camps in Poland, and of a handful of civilians.[35] A much more formidable task faced the Moscow commission, which had to deal not only with Polish POWs, but also with well over a million people of other categories, scattered over enormous territories. POW camps alone were located in as many as forty-seven regions of Russia proper, Ukraine, Belarus, and Siberia. Given the enormous size of the Soviet state, the mixed commission in Moscow had branches in St. Petersburg, Minsk, Khar'kov, Kiev, Odessa, Novosibirsk, and Chita in Siberia. However, the commission lacked sufficient means of transportation and other technical means, as the Soviet hosts failed to provide them.[36]

It would seem that the exchange of POWs should be a relatively easy task; yet, it was fraught with friction. By late May 1921, the Poles had returned over twenty-four thousand Bolshevik POWs, while the Soviets had released fewer than thirteen thousand Polish POWs. Polish protests addressing this discrepancy were to no avail. Indeed, Moscow used the issue of repatriation of POWs as an additional means of pressure on Warsaw in the conflict over diplomatic

representation that flared up at the time. In retaliation, Poland stopped sending transports of Bolshevik POWs on 27 May. The crisis lasted till 15 June, when the Soviets, having approved the candidature of Filipowicz a day earlier, resumed sending POWs. The Poles replied in kind; thus, the repatriation of POWs continued.

In August, however, the Soviets again drastically decreased the number of repatriated POWs, in breach of the agreement. Moscow demanded now that foreign anti-Bolsheviks be removed from Poland, and again used the issue of repatriation of POWs as a means of pressure on Warsaw.[37]

By mid-October 1921, the repatriation of POWs was finally practically completed. The Poles had returned nearly 66,000 Bolshevik POWs, while almost 1,000 of them refused to be repatriated and remained in Poland. The Soviet state had sent back over 26,000 Polish POWs. Warsaw estimated that 2,500 Polish POWs still remained in Russia. To induce Moscow to return them, the Poles decided to retain over 900 Bolshevik POWs, half of whom were Communists. In February 1922, all of these POWs were sent back to Russia in exchange for an unknown number of remaining Polish POWs.[38]

Repatriation of Russian and Ukrainian military internees from Poland was very much delayed for fear the Soviets would exact vengeance upon them. Not until November 1921 did Moscow grant an amnesty to former anti-Bolshevik soldiers remaining abroad. This amnesty had little effect until March 1922, however, when Soviet representatives officially announced it in the internment camps in Poland. Soon after, over two thousand internees, mostly ethnic Russians who had fought under Peremykin and Balakhovich, volunteered for repatriation, and by the end of June 1922 returned to their homeland. The number of volunteers was so small because most internees had little trust in the amnesty's sincerity. This distrust was paradoxically intensified by a wave of enthusiastic letters sent to the camps, purportedly by the repatriated from their homeland. On closer examination, it turned out the letters were almost identical in content; in addition, all were in identical envelopes, addressed by a typewriter, and posted from Warsaw.

By October 1923, a further eight hundred Russians had volunteered. Unlike Russian internees, Petliura's Ukrainians initially largely refused to be repatriated. Later, however, some of them changed their minds. In the end, by October 1923, about a thousand Ukrainian internees had returned to their homeland.[39]

Repatriation of civilians from both countries began in June 1921. Russian civilians in Poland were not very numerous, and few were willing to return to a Russia rent by famine and political terror. By the end of October 1921, about two thousand of them had returned to their homeland. It is unclear how many

civilians were repatriated from Poland after that date, but their number does not seem to have been substantial.[40]

By contrast, the number of civilians repatriated from Russia was staggering. The devastating famine of 1921, which peaked in the summer, prompted the Soviets to evacuate as many people as possible from the affected areas, especially the Volga region. As a result, as many as 143,000 refugees were sent from the famine areas to Poland, most of them from June to August 1921. They had not been properly registered, had not made optation, and quite often had no title to be sent to Poland, except for their desire to escape famine in Soviet Russia.[41]

On 10 August, Chicherin urged Warsaw to open a third reception station on the Polotsk—Mołodeczno line, as it was needed to send to Poland more refugees from the famine areas. Warsaw turned down Chicherin's request. To open another reception station on such short notice would be well-nigh impossible. Considering that Soviet Russia was rife with deadly epidemics, such as typhus and cholera, a reception station had to be equipped with a large hospital and an enormous quarantine ward. Instead, the Poles promised to increase the capacity of the two existing reception stations, and offered to send additional Polish representatives to the famine areas.

By this time, Warsaw had had enough of the chaotic and arbitrary manner of repatriation, and of the fact that ethnic Poles made up only a small percentage of the refugees. National-Democratic members of Parliament argued that the influx of foreigners from Russia ought to be stemmed, and those already in Poland treated as temporary immigrants, to be returned once the famine was over. As a result, Warsaw demanded that Moscow adhere "precisely" to the agreement on repatriation. Fortunately, in the fall the famine subsided, and the Soviets stopped sending refugees to Poland.[42]

Regular repatriation of civilians from the Soviet state began in July 1921. By October of that year, 139,000 of them, excluding refugees, were returned to Poland. The combined number of civilian repatriates, refugees, and POWs received by the Poles over the summer and early fall totaled 308,000 people.[43]

The two Polish reception stations were soon overwhelmed by such multitudes, especially since the repatriates had to be quarantined, in view of the epidemics. According to the agreement on repatriation, the two reception stations were together to receive over 4,000 people a week. The Poles had to scramble to increase their combined capacity to 10,500 people a week.[44] Yet, during the three critical months of July to September 1921, the total number of people received exceeded 260,000 or 20,000 a week. The greatest problem was the shortage of space in the quarantine wards. For instance, in January 1922, the two

reception stations combined had space for 9,500 people, yet somehow had to accommodate 39,000! By June 1922, the quarantine space increased to 23,500; it is doubtful, however, whether this was enough. As a result of these appalling conditions, a significant number of repatriates died at the reception stations. Nearly 1,500 people died at the Baranowicze station alone by May 1922.[45]

Much of the blame for these deaths, however, fell on the Soviets, since the repatriates arrived at the Polish border greatly exhausted, severely undernourished, and sometimes sick or infected with life-threatening diseases. To make matters worse, on the Soviet side there were no barracks and no health care or food supply facilities, as required by the agreement on repatriation. The situation was partially helped by the mission of the Society of Friends in Minsk, which fed and clothed Polish repatriates on their way to the border. This was a rare exception, however, since normally they were fed very poorly when traveling by train. The journey took several weeks and usually included a stopover in Moscow, where many were given no shelter. To make matters worse, those suffering from infectious diseases were sometimes transported together with the healthy. The number of the sick must have been substantial, given that the majority of those hospitalized in Minsk were repatriates.[46]

Before getting on the train, the repatriates spent a long time, up to several months, at dispatch stations. Conditions at those stations were deplorable, as the repatriates received no proper food, medical care, or shelter. To survive, they had to sell gradually whatever property they had managed to take with them. Their plight was particularly severe in the Stavropol region and in Ukraine, where many died of hunger and disease. To help their situation, Warsaw offered to send Polish medical personnel, but Moscow rejected this offer as an interference in Soviet internal affairs.[47]

The Soviet administration often contributed to making life very difficult for the repatriates. Provincial authorities not only made them pay for travel to Moscow but also for permission to get there, even though the treaty stipulated that repatriation be free of charge. The evacuation offices registering repatriates refused to recognize identification documents issued by the Poles, if they were not accompanied by Russian documents issued before 1914; yet, POWs of the Great War did not have them. Repatriates who missed their trains for such important reasons as death in the family, arrest, or lack of warm clothes in the dead of winter, were not given a second chance, in spite of a circular instruction issued by the mixed commission. If local authorities made a mistake in a repatriate's travel documents, the Soviet border authorities would send the poor wretch back to get it corrected; in one case, a man had to travel back to Irkutsk, in Siberia.[48]

To make matters worse, Soviet authorities sometimes failed to cooperate with the repatriation commission. This was caused not only by the usual inefficiency of the Soviet bureaucratic machine, but also by lack of good will. As the Soviet co-head of the commission admitted in June 1923, an inadequate flow of information between various branches of government "caused indeed certain issues to be settled only two years after the beginning of repatriation." At the same time, local authorities often ignored the commission's dispositions, on the grounds that the instructions on repatriation issued by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs failed to describe the role of that commission, and even to mention the existence of the Soviet delegation to it. Soviet authorities also prevented certain categories of people from being repatriated, such as soldiers, railroad workers, and other specialists, as well as orphans.[49]

Repatriation of civilians continued without interruption until early 1923, when Moscow decided unilaterally to end it. A Soviet note of 31 January 1923 asserted that in Russia, there remained less than twenty thousand people registered for repatriation, and in Poland, only a handful. For repatriation of such relatively small numbers, the mixed commissions in Warsaw and Moscow were not necessary. Consequently, the Soviets had decided to recall their delegations from each of the commissions, which would thus be dissolved. Repatriation from Russia was to end on 15 February 1923.[50]

The true reason behind this unilateral attempt to end repatriation early was most likely the Cheka's desire, as Ioffe put it, "to surround Russia with a Chinese wall." The Moscow mixed commission, with its numerous branches scattered across Soviet territories, was seen by the Cheka as a thorn in the flesh. To get rid of it, the Soviets decided to accuse the Poles of using the repatriation network for spying. Accordingly, in mid-January 1923, the Cheka planted compromising materials on Mertz, a Polish employee of the Minsk repatriation bureau, and arrested him on a charge of espionage.[51] While the Poles vehemently denied the charge, the Mertz case, exploited by Soviet propaganda, became a convenient pretext for an attempt at cutting short repatriation.

The Poles opposed this attempt for two main reasons. First, while the process of repatriation from European Russia was slowly nearing an end, it was still in full swing in such faraway places as Siberia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Soviet Far East. Second, Polish repatriation officials, working as they did in numerous regions of the Soviet state, served as an important and unique source of reliable information on the country, especially in regard to its economic life. Since the Cheka had largely succeeded in "surrounding Russia with a Chinese wall," there was a great thirst around the world for such information. The Poles

hence hoped to become leading experts on Soviet economic matters, thus enhancing Warsaw's role in the international arena.[52]

Accordingly, Knoll, in his new capacity as chargé d'affaires in Moscow, intervened with Ganetskii, who was now a member of the Collegium of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, to continue repatriation. Knoll tried to use as leverage the issue of recognition of the Soviet Union, newly created in late December 1922; the Soviets were obviously very interested in such recognition. Moscow was soon put on the defensive by a new diplomatic conflict with London, which flared up in March 1923 and lasted three months. Moreover, Lenin's health seriously deteriorated early that year; the Leader became incapacitated, while the thorny issue of succession remained unresolved. Thus, the Soviets came to realize that this was not the right moment to pick a serious quarrel with the Poles. In April 1923, they agreed to postpone the repatriation deadline to 1 August 1923. The Poles, however, insisted that repatriation be continued until 1 October 1923. After a month of further negotiations, the Soviets reluctantly accepted the Polish demand.[53]

Subsequently, however, the Poles claimed it was impossible to meet even the latter deadline because of various difficulties created by the Soviets. For example, the Soviet co-head of the Novosibirsk branch, Zamylko, left for Moscow in December 1922, leaving his deputy without any instructions or even a mandate; six months later, he had yet to return or be replaced. In the meantime, the Soviet delegation to the Novosibirsk branch failed to deal with over five hundred issues raised by their Polish counterparts. Some issues had remained untouched since 1921. By contrast, as of June 1923 there was not even one issue raised by the Soviets that had not been resolved by the Poles. When meeting the deadline proved impossible, the Soviets unilaterally suspended the activities of the Moscow commission, including its branches, in November 1923. They also unilaterally recalled their delegation from the Warsaw commission, thus actually dissolving it. After Polish remonstrances, they allowed the Moscow commission to renew its activity in December; however, the branches remained suspended until January 1924.[54]

Thus, repatriation continued until 25 June 1924, when the Moscow commission declared it completed in the Soviet Union, with the exception of the Caucasus and the Far East. Over a thousand issues raised by the Poles were still to be dealt with by the Soviets. Only on 30 August 1924 did the commission agree that "mass repatriation" in all of the Soviet Union was finally over.[55]

ROSTA, the Soviet press agency, announced that 1.1 million people had been repatriated from the Soviet Union to Poland between April 1921 and April 1924. Poles made up "between 15 and 25 percent of the total number," while

"Ukrainians and Belarusians" together constituted "about 65 percent." These percentages have been generally accepted in the literature, despite the obvious problem that they do not add up to a hundred—not to mention the huge relative difference between 15 and 25 percent. It therefore seems more appropriate to use the extant Polish archival statistics on the ethnic composition of the 427,000 people repatriated from June to December 1922. Among them, Belarusians made up 66.7 percent, Poles 20.2 percent, Ukrainians 8.3 percent, Jews 1.9 percent, Russians 1.4 percent, Germans 1.0 percent, Lithuanians 0.3 percent, and others 0.2 percent. For lack of a better indicator, these numbers may be accepted as roughly reflecting the ethnic composition of the total 1.1 million repatriates. According to Polish sources, around 1.5 million Poles remained in the Soviet state. This number seems to be corroborated by Soviet sources.[56]

A rather unusual aspect of repatriation was the so-called "personal exchange." As the Soviet co-head of the Moscow commission emphasized in 1923, it was the only aspect of repatriation in which the Soviets were actually interested.[57] Its principles were detailed in the additional protocol to the agreement on repatriation. Each side was to make a list of people it wanted to receive from the other side. Anyone could be placed on such a list, even people who were not citizens of the side requesting them. The only limitation was that no one could be exchanged against their will.

After the creation of the repatriation commissions in late April 1921, the Soviets presented the Poles with their list of three hundred people, mostly Polish citizens imprisoned for treason or Communist agitation. Warsaw accepted the list in its entirety. However, around a hundred of those listed refused to be sent to Russia. As a result, only 191 Polish Communists were ultimately sent. At the time, Warsaw did not present its own list, but instead asked the Soviets to facilitate repatriation which, it felt, they had "maliciously delayed and impeded."

In February 1922, the Soviets presented the Poles with a list of 317 more people. Three months later, an additional list of 14 followed. The Poles, in turn, submitted an initial list of 300, which they demanded be considered first. After ten months of negotiations, the Soviets agreed to an exchange of 617 people against 317, in the Poles' favor. Such a massive exchange had to gain the Polish Parliament's approval, which took considerable time. In the meantime, Warsaw proposed an immediate exchange of 23 Polish hostages in Russia for the same number of imprisoned Polish Communists. Such an exchange took place in March 1923.

After the Parliament finally gave its approval, the Soviets changed their minds and withdrew their list of 317 people. Following several months of further

negotiations, both sides agreed, in September 1923, to exchange the new Soviet list of 112 people for a Polish list of 363. When the Polish government approved such an exchange, the Soviets again changed their minds and demanded that the Polish list be altered. This demand effectively killed the exchange. Not to be discouraged, Moscow presented a new list of 51 people in March 1924. After a month of negotiations, both sides agreed to exchange 36 imprisoned Polish Communists for 117 Polish hostages in Russia. This exchange took place in late April 1924.

The next exchange was to be the final one, in view of the end of repatriation and the impending dissolution of the Moscow commission. In August 1924, the Soviets presented their list of 67 people and the Poles put forward their list of 208. This time, the Soviet list included almost exclusively the imprisoned members of Zakordot, the Soviet Ukrainian organization involved in espionage, sabotage, and subversive propaganda in Poland. Most of them had been recruited from Volhynian peasants of Ukrainian stock. Two were serving life sentences. The Polish list included not only ethnic Poles, but also some Ukrainians, Belarusians, Russians, Romanians, Hungarians, Serbs, and even French people, mostly imprisoned for espionage. Thirty-seven of them had been condemned to death, while 18 were likely to be so condemned.[58] The overwhelming majority belonged to the intelligentsia, including 40 people with university degrees, 13 Roman Catholic and several Greek Catholic priests, and 11 university students. Negotiations leading to this final exchange lasted several months and were marked by "many difficulties" and "an atmosphere of great tension." Apparently, the exchange took place in late December 1924 or early January 1925.[59]

By then, the total number of people received by Poland by means of personal exchange had reached 348. The total number of people received by the Soviet state was 317.

Marking the Border

Perhaps the key aspect of the implementation of the Riga treaty was the precise defining of the border line on the ground. This was to be done by special teams of topographers, while work teams were to erect border posts and cairns every few hundred meters along the line stretching from Latvia to Romania. In charge of this huge task was the mixed border commission, co-headed by Leon Wasilewski and Stanislav Pestkovskii, a Polish Bolshevik. The commission met for the first time in early May 1921, organized itself in June, and got down to work in July. The whole length of the border was divided into four sectors, each one to be dealt

with by a mixed subcommission. The subcommissions were named after the location of their headquarters or the region in which they operated, namely Polotsk-Wilejka, Minsk-Nieśwież, Polesie, and Volhynia. The commission itself resided at Minsk until the end of 1921, and subsequently at Równe in West Volhynia.[60]

The Riga treaty drew the border line based on the Russian so-called ten-verst map. The line was usually defined as one leaving certain villages on the Polish side and certain other villages on the Soviet side. When it came to marking the border line on the ground, however, it turned out that the ten-verst map was very imprecise. In many cases, the villages actually lay in different places or bore different names than those marked on the map. The gap between the map and the actual situation was especially large in the Polesie region, where supposedly uninhabited marshes, thirty kilometers wide, turned out to be dotted with about a hundred small settlements.[61]

A further difficulty had to do with the differing landholding systems on either side of the border. On the Soviet side, all agricultural land was owned by the state, which let it be used by the peasants. Therefore, if the border cut off some part of a Polish citizen's land, he would simply lose it, while a Soviet citizen would retain his ownership of a piece of land left on the Polish side. Nonetheless, he would be unable to use it because the Soviet border authorities would not let him through the border. To avoid such situations, the Poles insisted that the border ought not to cut across holdings. Prolonged negotiations ensued, during which the subcommissions suspended their activities. At long last, the Soviets agreed to the Polish proposal, unless the border line ran along a river. In view of the lack of official landholding maps, however, the subcommissions had first to gather relevant information by interviewing the local inhabitants, and then to draw their own maps. This was a very laborious and time-consuming task, which took most of 1921.[62]

The Polesie subcommission encountered a different kind of problem in the fall of 1921. Namely, members of Savinkov's organization, active especially in Łuniniec County, spread rumors that Poland would soon renew its war against the Soviets. As a result, the local population expected war and did not see any merit to the marking of the border. To make matters worse, some anti-Bolshevik guerilla detachments, active in the Morocz area, threatened to attack and murder the Soviet delegation to the subcommission. In one case, such an attempt was actually made by a small guerilla detachment; fortunately, they were disarmed and taken prisoner by the Poles. As a result, work on erecting border posts in the Polesie region had to be postponed for security reasons until the spring of 1922.[63]

In the spring, the danger of attack by anti-Bolshevik guerillas no longer existed; yet, the local population often vehemently opposed the marking of the border. In some cases, villages inhabited by ethnic Poles found themselves just east of the new border. The inhabitants feared that Soviet rule would bring them not only economic ruin but also reprisals for their support of the Polish Army during the war. They sent petitions to the commission and even to Warsaw with entreaties to draw the border slightly to the east of their settlements. In the meantime, angry crowds of villagers prevented the work teams from erecting the border posts.[64]

The Poles in the commission and subcommissions understood that under Soviet rule, Polish villagers would be subjected "to the most cruel persecution." This was clear from an order issued in December 1921 by the Cheka's Special Department in Slutsk, and acquired by the Second Department, "to register all Polish people and, in case of the slightest suspicion, to arrest [whole] families and confiscate their property." During investigation, torture was to be used.[65]

Considering this, the Poles proposed that the border line be slightly altered so as to leave Polish-inhabited villages on the Polish side. In exchange, they offered territorial compensation in other places. Each case required long and difficult negotiations, but, as a rule, the Soviets were not averse to getting rid of the potentially subversive Polish element, for proper compensation. The largest changes to the border line as drawn by the treaty were made in the Polesie region. Poland acquired there 26,700 desiatinas (292 square kilometers), inhabited by around 3,000 people, over 2,000 of them ethnically Polish. As compensation, the Soviets received 27,600 desiatinas (302 square kilometers), inhabited by 3,300 people, exclusively Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Jews. Smaller exchanges were made in each of the three other sectors of the border.[66]

The non-Polish local population opposed the marking of the border whenever they felt it would bring them economic ruin. The worst situation of this kind took place along the rivers of Słucz and Morocz in northern Polesie (see Map 6). All the villages on these rivers were located on the higher, western banks, where their arable lands also lay. On the lower, eastern banks were meadows where the cattle grazed. Cut off from their meadows by the border, the villagers would be unable to keep their cattle. This, in turn, would leave them without manure, which was necessary to fertilize their sandy arable lands. Since artificial fertilizer was unheard of in these backward parts, the inhabitants faced ruin. They demanded that the whole of their landed property be included in either Poland or the Soviet state. In mid-January 1922, the villagers even sent a delegation to Warsaw, which was received by Foreign Minister Skirmunt and by members of Parliament, including ex-premier Witos. The

Polish delegation to the commission sympathized with their plight as well, and insisted on changing the border, including compensation for the Soviets. The latter, however, maintained that the border must not be changed wherever the treaty defined it as following a river. Such changes, they argued, would amount to altering the treaty itself, something for which the commission had no mandate. Not to be deterred, the Poles still tried to get the border changed through diplomatic channels, but to no avail. In the end, the Polesie subcommission had no choice but to erect border posts along the two rivers. This was done in late September 1922. To prevent the local population from offering active resistance, the work teams did their jobs under the escort of a whole battalion of Polish infantry.[67]

In spite of these difficulties, the work of marking the border proceeded at an acceptable pace. While the completion deadline of 1 November 1922 was not met, the delay was not substantial, and by late November all the work had been completed. The checking of the so-called border post protocols, describing the topographical position of each post, took another two weeks. Here, the difficulty had been the Soviets' consistent unwillingness to make additional protocols in Belarusian or Ukrainian, as required by the commission's instruction. The Soviets in the Polesie subcommission, for instance, promised to supply protocols in Ukrainian in an unspecified future, and simply refused to supply protocols in Belarusian, for "such a language does not exist." It appears the missing protocols were never supplied.[68]

This little blemish notwithstanding, the Soviet-Polish border was thus precisely defined on the ground by late 1922. The 1,412-kilometer (877-mile)–long border was marked by twenty-three hundred posts and four hundred cairns on each side. Between the posts lay a neutral zone five meters wide. Overall, the defining and marking of the border represented the most efficiently implemented aspect of the whole Riga treaty.[69]

Reevacuation of Property

Both the reevacuation of property and the reevacuation and return of cultural treasures began with a considerable delay. This was not to be blamed on the Poles, who were naturally very eager to proceed. Indeed, Warsaw created the Polish delegations to the mixed reevacuation commission and to the so-called mixed special commission, dealing with the return and reevacuation of cultural treasures, as early as mid-May 1921. According to the Riga treaty, the commissions were to be established by mid-June 1921. The Soviets, however, refused to receive the Polish delegations, on the pretext of not yet having proper diplomatic relations with Poland. However,

once Karakhan arrived in Warsaw in early August, the Soviets had no choice but to let the delegations in. When the Poles arrived in Moscow in mid-August, they discovered that the Soviet delegations had not yet been formed. Moreover, the Soviet hosts had arranged no lodgings as promised, so the Poles had to remain on their train.[70]

The first meeting of each of the commissions took place only in the aftermath of the Karakhan-Dąbski agreement of 7 October 1921. The Polish co-head of both commissions was Antoni Olszewski. His Soviet counterpart was initially Otto Iu. Shmidt. After just three weeks, however, he was replaced by Petr L. Voikov, a very clever, educated, and imaginative Soviet official, specializing at the time in foreign trade. He had been involved in the execution of the tsar's family, and even wore a ring that had once belonged to one of its members. Incidentally, Voikov was the only Moscow specialist who had managed to get to Riga during the definitive peace negotiations. Now, his task was to hamper Polish efforts at reevacuation, while declaring Soviet commitment to the implementation of the treaty and blaming the Poles for any difficulties. Believing that "in case of international agreements, their implementation depends on the correlation of forces" at a given moment, he strove to employ a whole range of "means of pressure and intimidation."[71]

His Polish counterpart, Olszewski, was a talented, diligent, and tenacious civil engineer, very familiar with Russian industry. Unlike Voikov, he approached the reevacuation as a technical issue, not a political one. He had been in charge of the Polish delegation to the mixed commission dealing with the reevacuation of Polish property from Germany. The relevance of this experience, however, was not necessarily very great, since the Germans, unlike the Soviets, had loyally fulfilled their obligations. In any case, Voikov described Olszewski as "very skillful and wise." The Pole may also have been slightly gullible, however, since, after two months of working with his Soviet counterpart, he still professed to believe in his "unquestionably good will."[72]

Poland's initial stand in the reevacuation commission was not unreasonable. Realizing it would be difficult for the Soviets to quickly replace factories actually producing for the needs of the economy, the Poles proposed to deal first with property whose reevacuation would not have any adverse impact. For example, equipment from some Polish factories had been lying uselessly in crates on the Khodynka Field in Moscow since their evacuation in 1915. Standard-gauge railroad rolling stock was likewise useless in Russia, which used a wider gauge. Moreover, to lessen the impact of reevacuation on the vulnerable Soviet transportation system, the Poles offered to supply railroad cars, trucks, and packaging materials.[73]

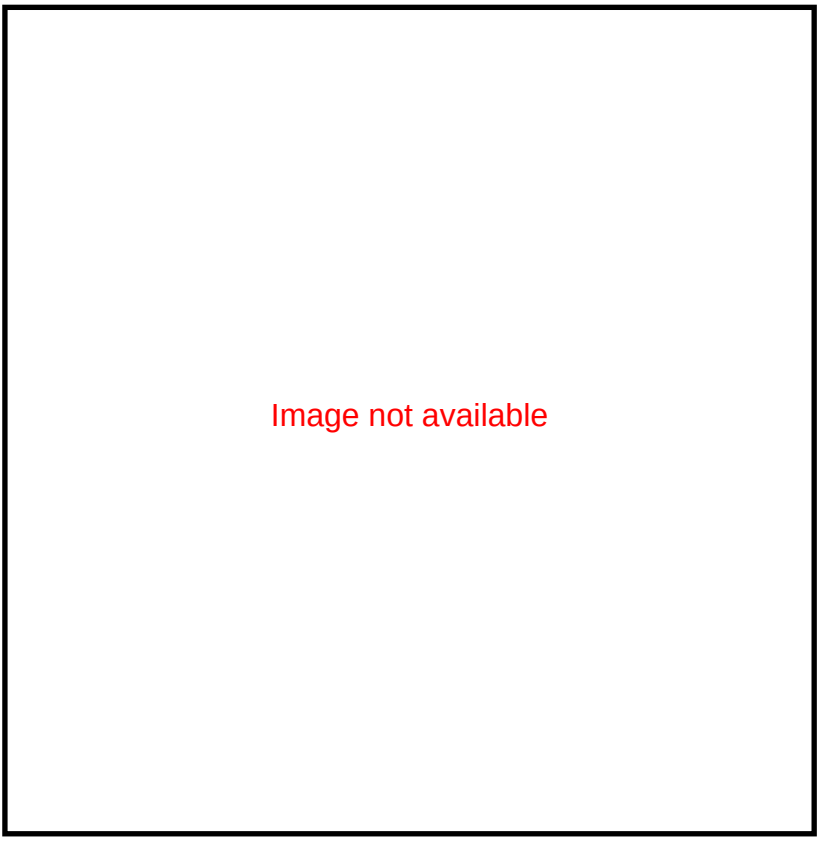

FIG. 16. Petr L. Voikov, the Soviet co-head of the reevacuation and special mixed commissions. AVPRF.

In reply, the Soviets declared their good will and intention to implement the Riga treaty. However, in practice they delayed reevacuation as much as possible. For instance, the work in the subcommissions was often paralyzed for weeks on end because their Soviet members would not attend the sessions. The Soviet co-head of one of the subcommissions could not be reached at all for several weeks. Important Polish proposals, to which the Soviets promised to reply "shortly," went unanswered for months on end. As a result, by the end of 1921 reevacuation had not even started.[74]

These delays were detrimental to the condition of items subject to reevacuation, due to Soviet failure to protect them if they were not actually in use. As a result, "anyone who was not lazy," as Voikov put it, could loot such items. For example, all wooden parts of railroad cars would be removed and used as

fuel. To make matters worse, a number of Soviet decrees specifically allowed Polish property to be confiscated, requisitioned, and passed between various entities, contradicting the Riga treaty. When Olszewski demanded that Voikov take steps to prevent the property from being looted or scattered, the Bolshevik declared "categorically" he had no mandate to do that.[75]

Delays also gave the Soviets more time to hide Polish property. This was important, since the treaty stipulated that private property be reevacuated "insofar as it can be found" by the commission. Already before the signing of the treaty, Ioffe urged Moscow to "skillfully" hide as much property as possible. There is little doubt that the Center actually acted on this advice. For instance, both Polish and Soviet data indicated that the equipment of a certain factory had been evacuated to the Kremlin warehouses. Since it could not be found there, however, the reevacuation claim was dropped. In some cases, ethnically Polish workers in Russia helped the Poles in the mixed commission to locate property subject to reevacuation. Still, it was obvious that delays made finding it more difficult.[76]

Naturally, Olszewski protested forcefully against the Soviet delays. Voikov, however, remained unimpressed. He purposefully pursued delaying tactics at this initial stage, having decided "to completely ignore the deadlines stipulated by the treaty." The Soviets needed time to come up with creative interpretations which would actually hamper reevacuation, while making it possible for them to claim that they were loyally adhering to the treaty. To accomplish this demanding task, Voikov hired a number of leading lawyers of the tsarist era. They were naturally very eager to join, considering that in the revolutionary police state of Bolshevik Russia, "bourgeois" lawyers were literally a dying breed. The lawyers managed to come up with a large number of creative interpretations of the treaty, which were adopted by Voikov as the basis on which Polish reevacuation claims would be considered.[77]

Some interpretations were indeed legitimate. For example, the Soviets refused to consider reevacuation of property evacuated from Wilno and Grodno. The claims for this property totaled 5 million rubles. They argued that in view of the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty of July 1920, Wilno and Grodno were part of Lithuanian territory. This was a debatable interpretation, especially after March 1923, when the great powers formally recognized Central Lithuania as part of Poland. Still, it was not without basis and did not contradict the letter of the Riga treaty. The majority of Soviet interpretations, however, defied common sense and constituted breaches of the treaty.

For example, for a claim to be accepted, the Poles had to prove that the owner of the property in question possessed legal title according to Russia's old

tsarist law code. This Bolshevik requirement contradicted existing Soviet law, which banned any use of that code. To prove one's ownership was not always easy, since the owner usually lived in Poland, while the property, together with its ownership papers, remained in Russia. In case of joint ownership, it was sometimes difficult to secure full powers from all co-owners, especially when their heirs were involved. As Voikov realized, the Soviet interpretation was "undoubtedly in contradiction" of the Riga treaty, which, after all, based reevacuation on a simple territorial principle: "everything that has been removed from Polish territory should be returned to it."[78]

The treaty made only one exception in this respect; namely, the property of Russians was not to be reevacuated. Creatively interpreting this stipulation, the Soviets deemed all Polish refugees in Russia, even those who had opted for Polish citizenship and returned to Poland, to be ineligible to make a reevacuation claim. Those Polish citizens who, in tsarist times, had belonged to the St. Petersburg merchant association were also deemed ineligible. This completely disregarded the fact that members of this association did not have to be Russian, or even to reside in St. Petersburg. Indeed, merchants resident in Poland sometimes joined it for reasons of prestige. Polish-Jewish merchants especially aspired to join it, since its members enjoyed the right, otherwise denied to Jews, to reside anywhere in the Russian Empire. Again, Voikov himself realized that the Soviet interpretation "defied common sense."[79]

The Soviets also required the Poles to prove that every single item belonging to the evacuated property had actually been evacuated; otherwise, they refused to reevacuate the item. Proving this was not at all easy, especially in the case of factories whose archives remained in Russia or had been lost. Even when the factory had paid for new machines before reevacuation and received them thereafter, the machines would not be reevacuated. Voikov well realized that this particular requirement was absurd. As he himself put it, "the return of an enterprise presupposes the return of all its component parts. One must not remove a nail from a piece of furniture just because it was not evacuated."[80]

These and other similar Soviet "interpretations" limited reevacuation severely. The Poles argued vehemently, but found themselves helpless in the face of Soviet intransigence. Debates lasted for months on end, impasses ensued, and in the meantime Polish property in Russia continued to be scattered, looted, and hidden. Given the treaty's failure to establish any mechanism of resolving disputes, the Poles had no recourse. Olszewski could only ask the Polish legation in Moscow or even the Polish government for help; yet, their ability to influence the Soviets was very limited. The bottom line was: the Soviets held Polish property—the Poles could take the scraps that were offered, or leave empty-handed.

Leaving Moscow and accusing the Soviets publicly of reneging on their obligation to reevacuate the property, however, was not really an option. First of all, it would further aggravate Polish–Soviet relations. The border had not been marked until late 1922, while repatriation continued till the summer of 1924. Both these issues, very important to the Poles, would have been jeopardized. Second, Warsaw was making strenuous efforts at the time to have the Riga border recognized by the great powers. Public accusations that the Soviets had reneged on the treaty would clearly undermine these efforts. Third, pulling the Polish delegation out of Moscow would certainly upset the owners of the property subject to reevacuation, including "several dozen very influential industrialists, and hundreds of less influential ones." They would surely prefer to get back a little than to get nothing at all.[81]

Thus, the Poles had no choice but reluctantly to accept the Soviet "interpretations," even though, as Voikov himself put it, they "differed undoubtedly from the meaning of the treaty and created a kind of separate agreement." Accordingly, the work in the subcommissions was a story of limiting reevacuation "in the extreme," as a leading official in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs put it.[82]

The question of Soviet payment for the state-owned Russian-gauge rolling stock that was subject to reevacuation but would remain in Russia was dealt with by the treasury subcommission. The Soviets were to send Poland precious stones worth 30 million rubles, to be realized on world markets. Then, Poland was to retain 27 million as the equivalent of the rolling stock. According to the treaty, the precious stones were to be sent in three batches, each worth 10 million. The last batch was to arrive in Warsaw in late October 1921. In reality, the first batch arrived in late November 1921, delayed by the Soviets on the pretext of Polish support for Savinkov, Petliura, and Balakhovich. The second batch followed only in March 1922, this time the Soviets apparently offering no excuse.

The major difficulty with which the subcommission had to deal, related to the pricing of precious stones. For instance, the Polish experts valued one set of gems at 24,000 rubles, while the Soviet experts priced it at 414,000 rubles! Accused of shameless overpricing, they decreased the number to 164,000 rubles. In view of continued Polish criticism, they lowered it to 83,000 rubles or one fifth of their initial price! Still, the remaining gap between the two prices was massive. Given such two radically different approaches to pricing, and the need to correct the initial Soviet numbers several times, the work of pricing the stones proceeded very slowly.[83]

The final result was also marked by controversy. The Soviets valued their two installments of precious stones at 20 million rubles. According to the Poles,

they were worth only 12.5 million. It became clear that the truth lay somewhere in between when "certain British bankers" offered "around 15 million" for the stones. The Soviets rejected the offer as too low but, given the difference in valuation, were apparently compelled by the Poles to give them a surety of 5 million rubles in gold coins.[84]

As for the third batch of precious stones, the two sides were completely unable to reach agreement on its value. After prolonged and divisive debates, the Soviets decided to cut the Gordian knot by refusing to send it at all. Thus, in the end, Poland received somewhere between 17.5 million rubles, as determined by the Poles, and 25 million rubles, as determined by the Soviets.[85]

Reevacuation of Polish means of production was, strictly speaking, the task of both the industrial and the highway-waterway subcommissions. The former dealt with entire factories and various machinery, the latter with river vessels and road-building equipment. The number and value of claims handled by the industrial subcommission, however, dwarfed those dealt with by the highway-waterway subcommission. Thus, for practical purposes, all the means of production may be treated as industrial property.

Preparation of industrial property reevacuation claims was a time-consuming process, since the Poles had to assemble vast documentation, some of which might have been misplaced, or held by the Soviets who would not share it. Yet, the treaty stipulated that the claims be submitted by 30 April 1922, even though the reevacuation commission began its work with a delay of several months. This difficulty seemed to be resolved when the Soviet representative in Warsaw, Karakhan, promised the Poles in the fall of 1921 that the Soviets would accept late claims. As it subsequently turned out, however, the value of his promise was not very great. Indeed, the total of 650 Polish claims was severely reduced when the Soviets rejected 300 of them as having been filed late. The remaining 350 involved predominantly the metal industry, and were worth 75 million rubles.[86]

The Soviets treated these claims with the whole range of their spurious "interpretations" that have already been described. They also made counterclaims, which totaled about 5 million rubles. The counterclaims took into account the government loans that the Polish entrepreneurs had received to construct the buildings necessary to reestablish their factories in Russia after evacuation. Yet, the buildings had been nationalized by the Soviets and would obviously remain in Russia. Consequently, the counterclaims made no sense, and Polish protests against them "agreed with common sense in the highest degree," as Voikov admitted to other Bolsheviks. He also realized that "all the numbers [contained in the counterclaims] are in general extremely contradictory." Still, he thought the

Soviet counterclaims "play their role very well" as "one of the means of pressure and intimidation."[87]

It is difficult to precisely determine the total value of industrial property that was, at long last, actually reevacuated to Poland. Voikov reported that "no more than 1.5 million" worth of property had been reevacuated by November 1923. According to Polish data, however, the property reevacuated by May 1924 was worth just over 700,000 rubles, and included twenty-three claims "fully or partially" accepted by the Soviets. Subsequently, property of unknown value was reevacuated, involving six claims. Overall, based on Polish data, the total value of reevacuated property seems to have been less than 1 million rubles.[88] That was about 1.5 percent of the total value of industrial property subject to reevacuation, according to Polish claims.

The railroad subcommission dealt with the reevacuation of standard-gauge rolling stock, both state-owned and private. As for the former, the treaty stipulated that 300 locomotives, 260 passenger cars, and 8,100 freight cars be reevacuated. These numbers, according to Voikov, reflected less than a quarter of the rolling stock that had actually been evacuated just from Congress Poland, excluding the Polish Borderlands.

In any case, the extent of reevacuation is, again, difficult to precisely establish. Voikov reported in November 1923 that the subcommission had actually reevacuated 120 locomotives, 30 freight cars, and no passenger cars. According to Polish official data, however, only 70 locomotives and no cars at all had been reevacuated by May 1924. The numbers were so low because nearly all standard-gauge Polish cars had been adapted to the Russian wide gauge and included in Soviet rolling stock. As Voikov reported, the reevacuated rolling stock was "in very poor condition." Practically, it had value only as "scrap metal."[89]

As for private rolling stock, the Poles presented nearly thirty claims totaling 17 million rubles. To deal with them, the Soviets, as Voikov put it, "resorted to the well-tested approach—bombarding, in every single case, with all possible sorts of legal conclusions, doubts, and interpretations of the treaty." For instance, they asserted that rolling stock ought not to be treated as means of production, but as goods. While this interpretation was obviously incorrect, it conveniently released the Soviets from the obligation to pay an indemnity for Polish rolling stock which had disappeared because of its inclusion in Soviet rolling stock.

After over a year of haggling, the Poles resigned themselves to all Soviet "interpretations." As of November 1923, they insisted on reevacuation of private rolling stock worth merely 3 million rubles. Voikov offered at the time as little as

1.7 million. In the end, it appears he withdrew even this offer, since according to Polish data of May 1924, no private rolling stock had been reevacuated.[90]

The agricultural subcommission dealt with reevacuation of horses and livestock. According to Voikov, Russian statistical data confirmed "that hundreds of thousands of horses and livestock were evacuated from Polish territories" during the Great War. The Poles managed to prepare some 10,000 reevacuation claims for 40,000 horses, including 8,000 bloodstock, and about 40,000 livestock, including 14,000 thoroughbred cattle and 9,500 thoroughbred sheep. On top of this, according to a special protocol attached to the Riga treaty, the state-owned stud of Janów Podlaski, famous for its three hundred Arabian horses, was also to be reevacuated.

Voikov viewed the Polish reevacuation claims as "hopeless," since the treaty did not require any indemnification for lost animals. Yet, many animals perished or were slaughtered during the Russian Civil War, while the remaining ones remained scattered all over Russia, making it practically impossible to find them. For their part, the Soviet managers of stud farms and cattle farms hid "everything they could," as Voikov put it.

There existed, however, precise data on the location of eight hundred cattle, six hundred sheep, and three hundred horses, all of them thoroughbred. The total value of these animals was over 6 million rubles. Because of their importance to Soviet agriculture, Voikov planned in November 1923 to buy them out for the price of 300,000 rubles or 5 percent of the animals' actual value. It is unclear why his plan did not come to fruition; most likely, it was rejected by the Bolshevik Central Committee as unnecessary, since it was easy to hide the animals. For example, the subcommission was actually able to locate only fifteen horses; incidentally, some of these thoroughbreds were found being used as draft horses. In any case, according to Polish data, no agricultural property had been either reevacuated or bought out by May 1924, and no Arabians of the Janów Podlaski stud were ever returned.[91]

The so-called household goods subcommission was supposed to deal with reevacuation of such private property as furniture, clothes, valuables, and securities. The total of over seven hundred claims was worth about 15 million rubles. The claims could be divided into four categories depending on where the specific property had been stored after its evacuation. The most valuable property had been kept in safes, or in repositories; some of it had found its way into pawnshops; and there was also property that had been left in the owners' apartments.

Paradoxically, Voikov "decisively" refused to recognize any of the property handled by the subcommission as subject to reevacuation. He argued that

"in this case, there was no evacuation in the proper sense; instead, frightened people or public servants traveling together with their evacuated offices took their property with them." Naturally, the Poles opposed this interpretation, as it contradicted the treaty.

After two years of stalemate, Voikov decided to offer "a 'compromise' actually annulling their claims." The Soviets would recognize the claims of the fourth category, if the Poles dropped all their remaining claims. This category included mainly furniture and clothes remaining in the owners' apartments. About three hundred claims totaled over 1 million rubles. Voikov estimated that half of them would not be processed, as the property in question had been appropriated "'legally' or 'illegally'" by other people. The Poles had no choice but to agree to this "compromise," since the property deposited in safes, repositories, and pawnshops had disappeared in any case. In the end, the subcommission processed only about seventy claims involving furniture and clothes, likely worth over 200,000 rubles.[92]

According to a secret annex to the Riga treaty, the Soviets were to return all the property confiscated during the seizures of the Polish Regency Council's legations and consulates, located in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Khar'kov, Odessa, Novorossiisk, and other places. The total claim was worth 1.3 million rubles. Voikov felt he could not completely deny this claim for two reasons. First, as he put it, "the requirements of the Riga treaty are categorical" in this case. Second, many influential people in Poland, and especially in the Foreign Ministry, were personally interested in the return of the confiscated property.

In short, Voikov believed that "one needs to accommodate the leadership, and questioning anything in this case would be extremely difficult." Accordingly, he planned in November 1923 to return the Moscow legation's library, furniture, and paintings. He wanted to add, moreover, some property from the St. Petersburg legation and pay 200,000 rubles. These terms should be acceptable to the Poles, he figured. Whether they were indeed approved by the Bolshevik Central Committee and then accepted by the Poles is unclear, however.[93]

Return and Reevacuation of Cultural Treasures

The mixed special commission dealt with the issues of return and reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures. It shared its co-heads and its difficult beginnings in Moscow with the reevacuation commission. It should not, therefore, come as a surprise that the two sides within the special commission differed significantly in their approach.

While the Poles were eager to do their job as quickly as possible, the Soviets adopted the tactic of clever delaying. For instance, they readily agreed

that the furniture of state-owned Warsaw palaces, lying in crates in the Kremlin warehouses, ought to be reevacuated "within the next few days." Three months later, however, the furniture was yet to be moved. There were a number of similar cases where the Soviets ostensibly agreed with Polish demands, gave "solemn promises," and set "deadlines" which then passed without any effect whatsoever.

To make matters worse, the Soviet side's procedures were very inefficient and time-consuming. For example, during the process of issuing, packing, and shipping of cultural treasures, officials of the special commission had to be accompanied by representatives of several Soviet agencies, including the institution releasing the items, the omnipresent Cheka, the Worker-Peasant Inspection, and the customs. In the case of absence of even one of these representatives, the work could not proceed. Yet, to gather them all at the same time was very difficult, since they were delegated ad hoc and were busy with their own duties. As a result, the work actually began between 11 A.M. and 1 P.M., and ended around 3 P.M. In this way, the process of reevacuation and return of cultural treasures was slowed to a crawl.

In the meantime, Polish cultural treasures in Russia were still further scattered. For example, in breach of the Riga treaty, the Soviet authorities sold Polish church bells to rural populations in exchange for foodstuffs. Twenty thousand church bells, some of them dating back to the twelfth century, had been forcibly evacuated from Poland in 1915. They were subsequently located and registered by a Polish association in Russia. Now, they were being sent from their storage places to various faraway regions, including Siberia. To find them there and recover them was practically impossible. Of these bells, considered by Poles the single most important cultural treasure subject to reevacuation, only seven thousand were ever returned.[94]

Despite these serious difficulties, the work on the reevacuation and return of Polish cultural treasures slowly progressed. The museum subcommission dealt with museum objects that had been removed from Poland since 1772. The Polish state, public and religious institutions, and private owners made a total of 170 claims. It is unknown how many of them were accepted by the Soviets. Still, by May 1924, the Polish state recovered a significant number of museum objects. As a rule, they had no great value to Russians, while the Poles were extremely happy to get them back.

Highlights among them included the *Battle of Grunwald*, a gigantic painting by the famous Polish historical painter, Jan Matejko, to which Poles attached a particular emotional value. The classical monument to the Polish hero of the Napoleonic era, Prince Józef Poniatowski, taken from Warsaw in

1836, was another sentimental favorite. The most valuable in monetary and perhaps artistic terms were several dozen huge tapestries, made in Flanders in the sixteenth century and removed from Warsaw in 1794. Two dozen of Canaletto's paintings of eighteenth-century Warsaw, taken from there in 1832, were invaluable to historians of the city. The furniture, paintings, and sculptures evacuated in 1915 from the Royal Castle and the Łazienki Palace in Warsaw were also important to Poland. Finally, Poles highly prized objects connected with military history, such as Polish regimental colors removed from Warsaw's museums, and cannons taken from Polish arsenals in the late eighteenth century.

According to the Riga treaty, the Soviets had the right not to return art objects that were part of world-renowned collections; in such cases, they were obliged to give an equivalent. Based on this clause, the Soviets refused to return anything kept in St. Petersburg's famed Hermitage Museum. Numerous quarrels about equivalents followed which were long and difficult to settle. For instance, the Soviets argued that a return of Fragonard's painting *The Stolen Kiss* would spoil the Hermitage's collection of French masters. The Poles maintained that a suitable equivalent for the painting would be a small Rembrandt or two other, less famous Fragonards. The Soviets would not even hear of it. A similar quarrel involved a collection of 18,000 old coins, including 1,000 gold and 13,000 silver coins, removed from Warsaw in 1832. The Soviets argued that this collection "has grown into the Hermitage's collections." The quarrel over an equivalent was settled as late as 1929. The Soviets had no particular incentive to resolve such issues, since in case of disagreement they remained in possession of both the original piece of art and any possible equivalent for it.[95]

As for the accepted private claims, the most significant was the vast art collection donated to Poland by Krosnowski, an ethnically Polish inhabitant of St. Petersburg. His collection included paintings, sculptures, tapestries, furniture, china, and suits of armor. Moreover, the Soviets returned furniture, paintings, and sculptures removed from four residences of three Polish aristocratic families, the Radziwiłłs, the Sanguszkos, and the Branickis.[96]

The special commission also dealt with the reevacuation and return of archives. This was a very demanding job, as Voikov observed, since Polish archives were stored by the Soviets in "basements, garages, and sheds" which were unheated, damp, dirty, and had no lighting. The total number of claims relating to various archives reached eighty.

The administrative archive subcommission dealt with reevacuation of all the very numerous institutional archives that had been evacuated from Polish territories during the Great War. Every Polish province of the Russian Empire, various state-owned banks and financial institutions located in those provinces,

the police, the courts of law, the Warsaw governor general, the state-owned forest administration, the customs, the censorship office, railroad companies, and other groups had had their archives evacuated into the depths of Russia. Most of these archives were stored in Moscow; yet, quite often parts of them had somehow found their way to various localities spread throughout Russia, which greatly impeded the work of reevacuation. In addition, the subcommission dealt with the evacuated property of Polish universities, such as various specimen collections and laboratories. According to Voikov, this property was "very valuable." More generally, as he observed, the administrative archives were "extremely important from the scholarly and the practical points of view."

The Soviets accepted the majority of Polish reevacuation claims submitted in this subcommission. They made, however, several significant exceptions. For instance, they rejected claims relating to the archives of the provinces of Wilno and Grodno. Most importantly, the Soviets refused to reevacuate the archives of financial and credit institutions, even though Voikov realized that such refusal was "unquestionably in breach of the Riga treaty." Moreover, the Soviets removed from all the reevacuated archives anything that would allow the Poles to make any financial or property claims. This "sterilization of archives," as they called it, was very time-consuming and, as Voikov observed, "extraordinarily hampers quick reevacuation of the archives." The Poles, who were unaware of the "sterilization," believed that the Bolsheviks were delaying reevacuation to make it more difficult for the new Polish state to establish its administration system quickly and effectively.[97]

The historical archive and library subcommission was the most important within the special commission. The Poles presented over twenty claims relating to two categories of historical archives. The first category, the majority of which the Soviets accepted, included archives removed from Poland since 1794. The most significant among them related to the Crown Archive, or the state archive of Crown Poland. The other highlights included the archive of King Stanisław August Poniatowski; the archive of the Permanent Commission, the last government of the *Rzeczpospolita,* and its departments; the records of the Sejm or Parliament of the *Rzeczpospolita;* and the papers of the Kościuszko uprising.

The Soviets refused, however, to return the so-called Lithuanian *Metrica,* the state archive of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, one of the two states federated within the *Rzeczpospolita*. The *Metrica* was removed by the Russians from Warsaw in 1794 and, according to the Riga treaty, ought to have been returned to Poland. The treaty stipulated that archives which "do not fully relate to the territory of the present Polish Republic but cannot be divided, be returned to Poland." The *Metrica* related only in part to the present Polish territory; yet,

because of the way it was composed it could not practically be divided. The Soviets argued, however, that the Lithuanian *Metrica* "ought to remain with us, because due to its nature it belongs to Russian scholarship and relates for the most part to Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, and on no account to Poland." Its return "would deprive Russian scholarship of a fundamental source for the history of western Russia." However debatable this argument, the *Metrica* remained in Russia. As a sop, the Poles were given summaries of it made in the eighteenth century by the Royal Chancery.

The Soviets also rejected the Polish claim related to the Central Historical Archive in Kiev. It contained over six thousand volumes of archival materials, collected from the entire Southwestland or the provinces of Volhynia, Podolia, and Kiev. These materials dated mainly from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, when these territories were part of Crown Poland. Since, in this case, it was possible to divide the archive, the Poles demanded over two thousand volumes relating to West Volhynia, which belonged to the new Polish state. The Soviets, however, were very reluctant. They argued that the archive had already been catalogued and arranged, and that its "importance to the history of Ukraine is enormous and absolutely exceptional." Yet, according to the treaty, Poland ought to receive part of the archive if it could be divided, and the whole if it could not. Voikov himself realized that "from the viewpoint of the Riga treaty, we are completely in the wrong." Still, the whole archive remained in Kiev.[98]

The second category of archives handled by the subcommission encompassed tsarist archives containing materials on Poland. The first group within that category included the archives of tsarist institutions or departments dealing exclusively with Polish territories. The most important among them were the Secretariat of State for Congress Poland, the Council of State's Department for Polish Affairs, the Peasant Affairs Commission for the Polish Provinces, and the Provisional Department for Confiscation within the Ministry of Agriculture and State-Owned Estates. The second group included the archives of central and local institutions of the Russian Empire that dealt with Polish territories among other issues. The most significant among them were the Council of State, the Council of Ministers, the Governing Senate, the Holy Synod, and various ministries. As Voikov observed, all these archives had "enormous value from both the scholarly and the practical points of view."

The Polish side presented over twenty claims in regard to the tsarist archives. Their scope being very wide, the Soviets rejected most of them. Voikov complained that "the Poles want to carry away from Russia and Ukraine literally all archival materials related to Poland." Indeed, as he realized, they had the right to do so under the terms of the Riga treaty which required the Soviets

to make available to Poland copies of these archival materials. According to Voikov, however, this requirement was "unrealistic." He estimated that "several dozen qualified clerks would have to work for at least five years" to make the copies. Moreover, the Soviets would have to absorb the cost of this operation. The alternative solution, however, would have been even more unpalatable to the Soviets; namely, to give away archival materials that had always been Russian. To give them away to Poland, Russia's centuries-old enemy, would have added insult to injury.

Indeed, a Polish member of the special commission saw the traditional Russian antipathy toward Poland as a factor in the rejection of a number of claims related to historical archives. "The old tsarist archivist or the old historian or scholar, retained in the service by the Soviets, continued to nurse the traditional hatred of Poland and aggressive tendencies toward it." This assessment actually may not have been very wide of the mark. It is confirmed by Voikov himself, who observed that "it was necessary to keep Russian academicians and scholars in check so they wouldn't call Poland the Vistula provinces, for instance, or something of the sort."[99]

The subcommission's work on the return and reevacuation of libraries was also filled with controversy. This was especially true in regard to libraries removed from Poland by the tsarist authorities since 1772. To return them at this point, a number of leading cultural and scholarly institutions in Russia and Ukraine would have had to be deprived of important collections of books, manuscripts, maps, and drawings. These institutions included the famed Public Library of St. Petersburg (subsequently the State Public Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, presently the Russian National Library), the Rumiantsev Library of Moscow (subsequently the Lenin State Library, presently the Russian State Library), the University of Moscow, and the University of Kiev.

The most important Polish claim related to the Library of the Załuski Brothers, which was founded in 1745 in Warsaw as a public library and in 1795 became the foundation and cornerstone of the Public Library of St. Petersburg. Other significant claims related to the Public Library of the University of Warsaw, the Library of the Association of the Friends of Science in Warsaw, and the Public Library of the University of Wilno, all of them removed by the Russians in the early 1830s. In addition, the Poles demanded the return of the libraries of several Polish religious orders and those of such Polish aristocratic families as the Radziwiłłs, the Czartoryskis, and the Sapiehas.

The single institution which the Polish claims affected the most was the Public Library of St. Petersburg, the largest library in the Soviet state, holding 3 million volumes. According to the Polish experts, no fewer than 400,000 of

its books and 14,000 of its manuscripts had been acquired by means of confiscation of Polish libraries. The Soviet experts contended that the number was "only 200,000." Voikov seemed to privately believe the Polish figure, since "Polish scholars had long been researching the fates of the libraries" removed from Poland to Russia; by contrast, "our scholars had no particular reason to constantly keep a record of Polish books and manuscripts accruing to Russian book collections."

Not unnaturally, the Soviets were very reluctant to accept the Polish claims. They argued that the Public Library of St. Petersburg was "one of the wonders of world culture" and to spoil "this splendid book collection" by returning Polish books would be "a shame and a stupidity." In reply, the Poles pointed out that according to the treaty, an item belonging to a world-renowned collection was not exempt from being returned, if it had "close ties with the history and culture of Poland." And, they asserted, most of the books in question did have such ties. Moreover, even in the case of an exempted item, the Soviets were obliged to give Poland an equivalent.

This Polish stand evoked much indignation on the part of Russian scholarly circles. The Russian Academy of Sciences made an appeal to the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Russian scholars admitted that the Polish libraries had been confiscated but they insisted that after so many years one must not "tear out organic parts from a living organism." The Polish scholars vehemently rejected this argumentation, however. They viewed the libraries' return not only as an obligation under the terms of the treaty but also as a necessary act of making amends for the original injustice of their confiscation. Given such a fundamental difference in approach, a stalemate ensued.

It was broken at long last in November 1922, when the two sides agreed to "a compromise solution," as Voikov put it. Poland was to receive 13,000 of the 14,000 Polish manuscripts held by the Public Library of St. Petersburg and only 15,000 of the 400,000 or 200,000 Polish books. The Poles made this concession in return for Soviet acceptance of Polish claims relating to the archive of the Secretariat of State for Congress Poland and, most importantly, to King Stanisław August's collection of drawings. The collection counted as many as 100,000 drawings, including works by Rembrandt, Dürer, Raphael, and della Bella. Moreover, the Soviets were to give Poland equivalents for the books and manuscripts remaining in St. Petersburg.

The Poles assumed that, with the signing of the "compromise" agreement, the quarrel about the Public Library's Polish books had been solved. The Soviets did not share this assumption. They made sure that, as Voikov put it, "the agreement was formulated in such a way that its implementation may take an

indefinite amount of time." He planned to make the return of the fifteen thousand books painfully slow and difficult. In addition, he intended to drag out for four years the preparatory work to establish the total value of equivalents of the books remaining. Voikov also envisioned creating conflict over the agreement's implementation, for "it can always come to serious disagreements when scholars of the two sides work together." All these measures were designed to make the frustrated Poles finally "offer a new compromise agreement that would at one stroke annul the present agreement."[100]

Indeed, due to Soviet delaying, only one batch of books from the Public Library was returned within the seven months following the agreement of November 1922. Yet, the Poles did not let themselves be provoked into requesting a new agreement; instead, they resigned themselves to protests and complaints. This tactic was not particularly successful, although by May 1924 the Soviets did return over seven thousand manuscripts belonging to the Library of the Załuski Brothers.[101]

The most important Polish claim affecting the libraries of Soviet Ukraine related to the Krzemieniec Lyceum in West Volhynia, a Polish college legendary for the quality of its education. The tsarist authorities closed it in 1833 and, on the basis of its confiscated library and various collections, founded in Kiev the Russian University of St. Vladimir. Voikov rejected the Polish claim after he had received "a categorical directive" from Soviet Ukraine that the Lyceum collections "must not be returned under any circumstances." The directive was issued in the aftermath of "a categorical statement" by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and by the most outstanding Ukrainian scholars that "it is impossible to return the Lyceum."

According to Voikov, the Ukrainian stand resulted to "a great extent" from "the extraordinary antipathy of Ukrainian scholarly circles to Poles in general." For instance, he had to keep in check "the Ukrainian academicians and scholars" employed by him as experts, for "they simply start beating" their Polish counterparts in case of serious disagreement. Indeed, as Voikov put it, "the debates and quarrels" were "more than heated," since the Polish side also approached the issue with "resolve." While he privately thought his Ukrainian experts to be completely in the wrong and using "preposterous" arguments, he continued to reject the Polish claim regarding the Lyceum collections.[102]

The subcommission also dealt with the reevacuation of libraries evacuated during the Great War. They included the libraries of all institutions of higher learning in Congress Poland; the libraries of the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw, of the Museum of Archeology, and of the Museum of the Ukrainian People in Lwów; as well as a number of military libraries. According to Voikov, most of

them had either been lost, or scattered, or burned. Since little was left to be reevacuated, in this rare instance the two sides did not have much to fight over.

Overall, however, the work in the subcommissions was marked by unbridgeable differences, heated quarrels, and persistent lack of agreement. As a result, the mixed special commission was unable to complete its work by the summer of 1924, as originally planned. It continued to exist, while the results of its labors depended not so much on the diligence of its members as on the current state of Soviet-Polish relations in general.

With a marked improvement in those relations after Piłsudski's coup d'état of 1926, agreement was reached in November 1927 on resolving over thirty Polish claims that had remained in limbo. As a result, the Soviets returned a number of important museum objects, including paintings by Wouvermans, Watteau, and Rembrandt; a series of the Flanders tapestries removed from the royal Wawel Castle in Cracow; the coronation sword of the Polish kings; and the great standard of Crown Poland. They also returned the archive and library of the Branicki family, and the archive of Archbishop Andrii Sheptyts'kyi, the head of the Greek Catholic or Uniate Church in Poland.

The signing of the Soviet-Polish nonaggression pact of 1932 was followed by another spell of activity by the special commission. It resulted in the Soviets' returning the public libraries of the Warsaw Scholarly Association and the University of Warsaw, totaling together fourteen thousand manuscripts and forty-seven thousand volumes. The archives of the Senate of Congress Poland and of a couple of its ministries and central offices were also returned.

The mixed special commission ended its work in April 1934, even though a significant number of Polish claims remained still unresolved. With Poland's international position weakened in the face of Germany's resurgence, the Soviets no longer had any intention to continue returning Polish cultural treasures.[103]

Settlement of Accounts

The Riga treaty stipulated that the two sides "settle accounts" in regard to the funds kept in deposit in former imperial banks and credit institutions, and owned by Polish individuals, public institutions, and cultural, religious, and charitable institutions and associations. This was to be done by the mixed commission on settlement of accounts, residing in Warsaw. The treaty stipulated that it be established by mid-June 1921. While the Polish delegation to the commission was ready by that date, the Soviet delegation arrived in Warsaw only in early August. As a result of further Soviet delays, the commission began its activity in early November 1921. It was

co-headed by Józef Karśnicki on the Polish side, and Leonid Obolenskii on the Soviet side.

Settlement of accounts was to be effected on the basis of archives and records of various former imperial banks and credit institutions. Since these archives and records remained in Russia, it was crucial that the Soviet side make them available to the Poles. The Soviets indeed obliged themselves to do it, but were slow to deliver on that promise. As a result, until June 1922 the commission limited its activity to mere theoretical discussions on how best to settle accounts.

The most important, from the Polish point of view, was the issue of the former Russian state-owned savings banks. These banks had had 600,000 Polish deposit holders, whose savings totaled 140 million rubles. The Polish initial claim in this regard, made already in November 1921, was not unreasonable. Taking into account the Soviet state's difficult economic situation, and wanting to finalize the issue quickly, the Poles proposed that the Soviets return 5 percent of the total amount of savings. The latter agreed—in principle.

In June 1922, however, the Soviets changed their stand. Instead of a lump sum, they proposed to settle each account individually. The Polish side would present individual claims based on the records of account owners. The Soviet side would then verify each claim based on the saving bank's records remaining in Russia. The Poles rejected the Soviet proposal in view of both the impracticality of making 600,000 separate claims and the possibility that some owners might have lost their records. Instead, they quickly made a compromise proposal that combined elements of both the Polish initial proposal and the Soviet counterproposal. The Soviets promised to reply as soon as they received instructions from Moscow. The instructions, however, were slow in coming. In September 1922, Obolenskii and his deputy left for Moscow in an apparent effort to induce the Center to issue them. During their absence, the labors of the mixed commission were suspended.

At long last, the two Bolsheviks returned to Warsaw with instructions, and the commission renewed its activity in January 1923. They offered to pay a lump sum of 1,000 million Polish marks on account of their obligations flowing from the settlement of the savings bank accounts. This amount, they held, was worth 200 million rubles. The Soviets were theoretically correct, in view of the Riga treaty stipulation that settlement of accounts be carried out using a fixed exchange rate of five Polish marks to one ruble. However, due to hyperinflation, the Polish mark had fallen tremendously since the signing of the treaty. As a result, at the time of the Soviet proposal, 1,000 million Polish marks was actually worth 26,000 dollars or about 50,000 gold rubles. The Poles considered

it embarrassingly little and rejected the proposal. The Soviets responded by replacing Obolenskii by Pergament.

The new co-head of the commission agreed to the creation of several subcommissions with the task of precisely establishing the amount owed by the Soviet state. After several months of work, the subcommissions arrived at the amount of 243 million rubles in total, including 156 million in cash, 71 million in Russian securities, and 16 million in Polish securities. It was not clear, however, how much of that the Soviets intended to pay. Pergament and his deputy went to Moscow in September 1923, apparently for instructions. During their absence, the commission suspended its activities. The Poles protested.

At long last, in January 1924, the Soviet legation in Warsaw declared that the Soviets recognized Polish claims to 242 million rubles. Using the fixed rate of exchange of one ruble to five Polish marks, they calculated their total obligations at 11,081 million Polish marks. Due to continued hyperinflation of the Polish mark, this amount equaled at the time to just over 1,000 dollars.

The Poles rejected this offer. They argued that, even if one were to accept the fixed rate of exchange, the amount still ought to be much higher. This was due to the Riga treaty stipulation that Polish securities, worth 16 million rubles, be returned either in kind or in equivalent. Moreover, to bolster their bargaining position, the Poles presented new claims relating to Russia's various monetary obligations to all those former civil servants, military officers, and state-owned railroad workers who lived on Polish territory.

The Soviets ignored the new Polish claims and refused to change their stand on the amount they owed. In June 1924, the last remaining Soviet member of the mixed commission left Warsaw. In reply to Polish protests, the Soviet legation in Warsaw declared it saw no point in any further continuation of the labors of the commission. As it was, the final result of three and a half years of its activity was nil.[104]

The Gold Reserves Issue and Soviet Fulfillment of the Treaty

According to the Riga treaty, the Soviets were to pay Poland 30 million rubles in gold coin or bullion by 30 April 1922. This obligation resulted from taking into account "the active participation" of Polish territories in the economic life of the former Russian Empire. In a secret annex to the treaty, Poland agreed that the payment be made by means of Krasin's so-called gold scheme which was to begin in mid-May 1921. However, the Soviets never initiated the scheme, apparently as a result

of a quick end to the American embargo on Soviet gold. The Poles thus found themselves in an awkward situation. They could not protest officially, since the annex was secret, while the published treaty stipulated that Warsaw receive the whole amount by 30 April 1922.[105]

As soon as this deadline passed, however, Foreign Minister Skirmunt sent Chicherin a note complaining that Soviet Russia was hindering the implementation of the Riga treaty. While the Soviet default on the payment constituted a grave breach of the treaty, Skirmunt's note was calm in tone. Indeed, he preferred a "matter-of-fact" approach based on "self-restraint" and designed to have "a moderating influence." The issue of particular importance to Poland at this juncture was to get the new Polish-Soviet border precisely defined and marked. Overreacting about Soviet breaches of the treaty on other issues might have compromised that goal. Moreover, Warsaw was trying its best at the time to induce the great powers to recognize the new border. Making a big issue out of Soviet breaches of the Riga treaty would obviously undermine these efforts.[106]

The line of moderation was continued by Skirmunt's successor, Gabriel Narutowicz. During his August 1922 meeting in Warsaw with Chicherin's deputy, Maksim Litvinov, Narutowicz "drew [his] attention to Russia's default on many of its obligations" under the treaty. In reply, Litvinov insisted that "some" of Russia's obligations were "unrealizable because of its catastrophic financial situation." He obviously alluded to the 30 million rubles in gold. The Pole answered that he was "ready to consider Soviet proposals in regard to the implementation of certain clauses." Clearly, this was an offer of renegotiation of Soviet financial obligations. Litvinov promised to send such a proposal after his return to Moscow.[107]

Yet, he never delivered on the promise. The Soviets had bolstered their international position and gained a significant advantage over Poland by coming to terms with Germany in the Rapallo treaty of April 1922. Moreover, they had no reason to renegotiate the Riga treaty's financial-economic clauses, since they had managed to hinder their implementation extremely well. According to the Poles, only 3 percent of Polish industrial property had been reevacuated from Soviet Russia by January 1923. This estimate may actually have been generous in view of a statement by Ganetskii, in his capacity as a member of the Collegium of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. He maintained in early June 1923: "One can say without exaggeration that in the last two years we have fulfilled no more than one hundredth of our obligations. We have sabotaged this issue in the extreme." It was highly unlikely that any Polish government would formally accept such low percentages and sign an agreement to that effect.[108]

In early 1923, the issue of the implementation of the financial-economic clauses became temporarily eclipsed by the problem of Moscow's breaches of its treaty obligations in regard to the Polish national minority in the Soviet state. Considering their position to be very strong, the Bolsheviks breached very blatantly their obligation to allow "individuals of Polish nationality . . . to freely practice their religion." Increasing numbers of Catholic priests of Polish nationality were being arrested, especially in the Borderlands. The most spectacular case was that of Jan Cieplak, the archbishop of Mogilev and the head of the Catholic Church in Russia, who was sentenced to death for "crimes against the People and the State," as Chicherin put it. When Warsaw vehemently protested against this travesty of justice, the Bolshevik thundered back that its protest was "undoubtedly an act of unfriendliness and a manifestation of aggressive policy toward Russia."[109]

Soon, however, the general political situation forced the Soviets to be slightly more accommodating. In mid-March 1923, Lenin became incapacitated by a stroke, while the thorny issue of succession remained unresolved. The Soviet-British diplomatic conflict also flared up at this time. Believing the Communist movement in Germany to be on the verge of coming to power, the Soviets tried to entice Poland into maintaining benevolent neutrality. It was also important for Moscow to be able to send grain to Germany through Poland. Under the circumstances, the Politburo decided in mid-June 1923 that a rapprochement with Poland was desirable, especially in the realm of economics.[110]

Accordingly, in mid-July, Moscow offered to pay Warsaw 20 million gold rubles "to liquidate all Polish claims under the Riga treaty, with the exception of those in regard to industrial property and cultural treasures." The payment would be spread over ten years. Should Warsaw reject this offer, "Russia will continue to hinder the implementation of the Riga treaty, and Poland will receive next to nothing." Still, the Poles insisted on the treaty's full implementation by the Soviets, using as a lever the issue of recognition of the Soviet Union, which had been newly created. This had little effect on Moscow, as it argued that if Warsaw should refuse such recognition, the Soviets would consider themselves released from any obligations under the treaty. Nonetheless, the Politburo decided to sweeten its offer. In late October 1923, Victor Kopp, the Soviet diplomat, arrived in Warsaw, professing that Moscow was willing to pay the whole amount of 30 million rubles in gold.[111]

The Poles, however, had no intention of supporting German Communists, even indirectly. Warsaw did not consider, even for a moment, the possibility of an agreement whereby Poland would declare its *désintéressement* regarding Germany while the Soviets did not. Such an agreement, they figured, would surely

have incurred the wrath of the Entente and "caused general indignation." To get around this, the Poles cleverly pointed out that free transit of nonmilitary goods was guaranteed by the Riga treaty. They would be happy to let Soviet grain through to Germany if only the Soviets fulfilled their most important obligations under the treaty. Here, they presented a list of ten demands, including especially the payment of 30 million rubles in gold; the payment of the third installment of precious stones; the reevacuation of key factories; and the return of the most significant archives, libraries, and museum objects. The Poles also demanded a detailed schedule for the implementation of these demands.[112]

Kopp reluctantly accepted the demands as a basis for discussion, then left for Moscow to gain time. This was a prudent move, since it soon became obvious that a Communist revolution in Germany stood no chance of success. Consequently, the Soviets were no longer interested in any Polish suggestions on how to implement the treaty. In talks in the spring of 1924 between Darowski, the Polish minister in Moscow, and Kopp, the latter proposed to cancel all Soviet obligations in return for a trade convention. The Pole retorted that "no Polish government will renounce its rights under the treaty." Not to be discouraged, Kopp strongly believed that Warsaw would at least agree to a moratorium on Soviet obligations. The Poles, however, figured that a moratorium, in particular on payment of the 30 million rubles in gold, would effectively put off these obligations *ad kalendas Graecas*. In February 1925, they still stubbornly insisted that Soviet obligations be "speedily" fulfilled.[113]

The Soviets could live without a formal agreement canceling their obligations. Yet, they would have preferred Warsaw to withdraw its demands voluntarily. By the fall of 1925, the Poles had indeed reduced their demands; still, they insisted that the Soviets satisfy them on the following three points: payment of 30 million rubles in gold; settlement of accounts; and return of the archives related to Wilno. In reply, Chicherin apparently proposed an agreement canceling their mutual obligations. Aleksander Skrzyński, the Polish foreign minister, retorted: "Nothing is certainly not much."[114]

Poland's worsened international situation in the aftermath of the Locarno pacts of October 1925, however, made the Soviets think that the Poles were finally ready to conclude an agreement releasing them from any further obligations under the Riga treaty. Yet, in January 1926, the Polish minister in Moscow, Stanisław Kętrzyński, was still trying to impress on Chicherin "the desirability of paying the 30 million," even though he no longer insisted on Soviet fulfillment of any other obligations. The Bolshevik replied that "the creation of very firm and friendly relations between our two states" ought not to be compromised by Polish insistence on a mere 30 million.[115]

Indeed, five years after the signing of the Riga treaty, the issue of its implementation was well on its way to being swept under the carpet. Other issues, such as negotiations on a trade convention and a nonaggression pact, took center stage. This shift of emphasis accelerated after Piłsudski's coup d'état of May 1926. Two months later, Polish Foreign Minister August Zaleski saw fit to inform the Parliament about "a certain progress" in the implementation of "certain parts of the Riga treaty," while mentioning no difficulties. In December 1926, Piłsudski assured the Soviet minister in Warsaw, Voikov, that he wanted "neither quarrel nor war," and that the conclusion of a nonaggression pact was important to him. Given Moscow's reluctance to fulfill its obligations under the Riga treaty, the formula "neither quarrel nor war" entailed necessarily the silencing of Polish demands in this regard. As a sop to Warsaw, an agreement on return of certain Polish cultural treasures was signed in November 1927. While the Poles continued to make low-key efforts in regard to further return of cultural treasures, the demands for the payment of 30 million rubles and the complete fulfillment of other Soviet obligations were quietly abandoned.[116]

It is fair to say that the Soviets orchestrated a campaign to limit the implementation of the Riga treaty "in the extreme," as they themselves put it. This campaign was conducted with significant skill and great resourcefulness, involving a wide array of Soviet departments and institutions, especially Soviet diplomacy. The two most important players in its execution were Chicherin and Voikov.

The former opened the campaign with numerous accusations that Poland had breached the treaty by supporting the anti-Bolshevik movements led by Savinkov, Petliura, and Balakhovich. These accusations had the advantage of being based on fact, which gave Moscow a convenient pretext to delay the implementation of the treaty. Chicherin also exploited the issue of Polish delays in establishing regular diplomatic relations. As a result, implementation of the treaty began six months, rather than six weeks, after the treaty's ratification.

Once implementation started, Voikov entered the picture as co-head of two very important mixed commissions, one dealing with the reevacuation of Polish property and the other with the return and reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures. He employed spurious interpretations of the treaty to limit the reevacuation of property so severely as to practically prevent it. Indeed, the final value of reevacuated property was perhaps 1 or 2 percent of Polish claims. In that commission, the only instance of a significant fulfillment of obligations were the two Soviet installments of precious stones, in payment for Polish wide-gauge rolling stock that was subject to reevacuation but would remain in Russia.

Voikov was more liberal when it came to the return and reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures. The Soviets returned and reevacuated a number of museum objects and archives that had no particular value to them. They were more stingy, however, in regard to returning libraries. Overall, the Poles were not completely disappointed with the labors of the special commission, even though a significant number of cultural treasures that should have been returned under the treaty remained in the Soviet state.

The commission on settlement of accounts achieved no results whatsoever. This was mostly due to a defect in the treaty itself, as it failed to make allowance for the rapid inflation of the Polish mark. The Soviets exploited this defect by resorting to very substantial delays.

The repatriation commission was more effective, even though it worked in an atmosphere of constant friction and difficulty. The latter usually resulted from Soviet actions in contradiction of the treaty, for instance, the unilateral sending to Poland of refugees from provinces affected by famine. Nonetheless, the effects of the commission's work were substantial. These included the exchange of tens of thousands of prisoners of war; the so-called personal exchange of several hundred individuals particularly desired by each side; and the repatriation to Poland of over 1 million people. Warsaw estimated, however, that as many as 1.5 million Poles remained in the Soviet state, quite often because of various Soviet obstacles preventing their repatriation.

Most effective, and least contentious, was the border commission. In this instance, Moscow as much as Warsaw needed the border to be precisely defined and marked on the ground. Still, it was a difficult and complicated process. The most important problems included the lack of proper maps, the opposition of the local population, and the need to introduce minor changes to the border as defined by the treaty. The border commission was the only mixed commission that, for all practical purposes, completed its work fully.

Indeed, most major Soviet obligations were implemented to a small degree, even though the mixed commissions were supposed to ensure their full implementation. Little wonder that the remaining Soviet obligations, whose implementation was not within the purview of any commission, were not implemented at all. The Polish minority, for instance, was denied freedom of religion. Even more important, from Warsaw's point of view, was Soviet failure to pay 30 million rubles in gold.

Poland tried to retaliate by refusing to grant the Soviets transit rights through its territory, as required by the treaty. In general, however, it lacked leverage because Polish obligations under the treaty were few, and relatively minor. The treaty's failure to establish any mechanism for resolving disputes

regarding its implementation left the Poles well-nigh helpless. All they could do was protest; yet, protests made little impression on the Soviets. The threat of breaking off diplomatic relations, made in September 1921 by the Polish representative in Moscow, turned out to be more effective; however, Warsaw was reluctant to use it, as it undermined its efforts to get the Riga border recognized by the great powers. The Polish attempt to exploit the issue of recognition of the newly created Soviet Union was likewise less than successful. Moscow was determined not to give in to Polish pressure, and argued that if Warsaw should refuse such recognition, the Soviets would consider themselves released from any obligations under the treaty.

Finding barely any leverage in bilateral relations, the Poles tried to exploit Soviet internal and external needs and difficulties. This tactic brought some limited success, especially in 1923. However, with the worsening of Poland's own international situation in the two following years, the Poles were no longer able to continue pressing the Soviets to implement the treaty. As a result, the process ground to a halt in 1924.

In the final analysis, the Riga treaty was never fully implemented. Its actual implementation was limited, for all practical purposes, to the marking of the border, the incomplete repatriation, the partial return and reevacuation of Polish cultural treasures, and the partial payment for Polish wide-gauge rolling stock. This was the result of a clever and skillful campaign, orchestrated by the Soviets, of severely limiting the implementation. Chicherin and Voikov were its main heroes, the two masters of tactical delay and spurious argument. The Poles, for their part, showed determination and tenacity in their attempts to make the Soviets fulfill their obligations; indeed, their efforts were not completely without success. In the end, however, they had no choice but to reconcile themselves to the idea that much of the treaty would not be implemented.

Epilogue

The Soviet-Polish peace of 1921 put an end to a military and diplomatic struggle stretching over two years. Conflict resulted from the clash between two maximalist concepts pursued by each side. The Bolshevik leader, Lenin, strove to export revolution to the rest of Europe, especially to its industrialized West. To achieve that objective, Poland, separating Russia from Germany, had to be Sovietized. On the other side, the Polish leader, Piłsudski, pursued the concept of so-called federalism, whereby Poland would be federated or closely allied with the indigenous nations of the historic Borderlands. The success of Polish federalism would have necessitated the removal of Russia from the region, which Moscow considered its exclusive sphere of influence.

The crux of the Riga compromise lay in exchange of Polish renunciation of federalism for Soviet territorial concessions. The Poles found it difficult to hold on to the policy of federalism because it suffered from certain weaknesses. For strategic reasons, they had to fill the gap between Wilno, in the north, and Lwów, in the south; hence, it was necessary to annex West Volhynia and western Belarus, both ethnically non-Polish. To Ukrainian and Belarusian national activists, this seemed a very heavy price to pay for Polish support. In addition, although the Poles made a firm commitment to establish an independent Ukrainian republic in the rest of the Southwestland, many Ukrainians received this promise with ambivalence, since Warsaw treated East Galicia, the center of Ukrainian nationalism, as an integral part of Poland. Belarusians were likewise ambivalent about Polish support, since it was limited to the creation of an autonomous Belarus only in the Minsk region. At the same time, the Allies opposed any Polish support for Ukrainians and Belarusians, seeing these East

Slavic ethnic groups as belonging to the Russian nation, and their territory as an integral part of Russia.

While not very successful, Polish federalism nonetheless compelled Moscow to maintain the illusion of Soviet Ukrainian and Soviet Belarusian independence. The very existence of these Soviet republics allowed Moscow to claim locally and internationally that it was addressing Ukrainian and Belarusian national concerns. In reality, however, these republics enjoyed neither popular legitimacy nor sovereignty. This was obvious in view of the strong local resistance against Soviet rule, especially in Ukraine.

The Borderlands policies of both sides were thus marked by serious difficulties, and evoked no mass support among either Ukrainians or Belarusians. Consequently, the future of each policy depended mainly on the result of military struggle between the two powers. This struggle included some remarkable changes of military fortunes, including the intentional Soviet withdrawal from Kiev, whose capture was then exploited by the Bolsheviks to mobilize nationally minded Russians for "defense" of the Borderlands. The subsequent Soviet invasion of Poland proper unleashed, in turn, a torrent of national feeling among the Poles. At long last, the war revealed that neither side was able to decisively defeat its opponent. Although Russia was the more exhausted by the early fall of 1920, its military potential was far greater, and the Poles could not but recognize their vulnerability in the wake of the momentous summer campaign. Both parties were thus ready for compromise.

The compromise territorial settlement was reached in the preliminary peace treaty. The Polish claim to the eastern part of the Wilno region, the so-called Grabski corridor, was recognized directly by the Soviets, while indirectly they also recognized the claim to Wilno itself, held then by Lithuanian troops. This practically sealed the fate of the city, which was eventually annexed to Poland. To secure their possession of both the Wilno region and East Galicia, the Poles required the territories between them, including especially the strategic Baranowicze-Łuniniec-Sarny-Równe railroad line. Thus, West Volhynia and western Belarus, though ethnically non-Polish, found themselves within the Polish border. In return, Warsaw recognized Soviet domination over the remaining and larger part of the Borderlands; indeed, it officially recognized the Soviet republics of Ukraine and Belarus. For Moscow such recognition was a sine qua non, as the Soviets were determined to eradicate Polish federalism.

In the end, both sides received their vital demands. The Poles obtained what they viewed as Polish ethnic territory in the Borderlands, together with a strategic defensive line. The Soviets secured their power over most of the Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnic territories, which were to be held on their own

terms in the absence of any further pressure from Polish federalism. The territorial settlement was thus a result of compromise, even though the Soviets made the more spectacular concessions.

As for other issues dealt with by the peace treaty, they resulted mainly from the fact that most of the Polish state had been part of the Russian Empire. The Poles claimed their share of the empire's treasury and all that had been forcibly removed and evacuated from Poland by the tsarist administration. The Soviets had no choice but to recognize the validity of these claims in the preliminary treaty. The actual extent of Soviet obligations was agreed upon during negotiations leading to the definitive treaty. Compromise was reached chiefly by scaling down the Polish claims, and thus involved mainly Polish concessions.

Both the preliminary and the definitive peace negotiations were very difficult and tense. Credit for their ultimate success must go mainly to Ioffe and Chicherin on the Soviet side, and to Dąbski on the Polish side. Chicherin played a particularly constructive role in the preliminary peace negotiations. Right from the start, he believed in the possibility of compromise, and made a decisive intervention when his subordinate's infelicitous draft of the preliminary treaty threatened to derail negotiations. Ioffe was instrumental especially in concluding the definitive treaty. An excellent negotiator, he had a clear advantage over Dąbski when dealing with a maze of difficult and often interconnected issues. During the definitive peace negotiations, he displayed an unusually good sense of how far he could push the Poles. While he fought very hard to win as many concessions as possible, he was careful not to cross that line. He even boldly protested when Moscow ordered him to crudely adopt a "tough and unyielding" approach.

Dąbski, certainly, was not very pliable, as he tried to make up for his want of negotiating skills by great resolve in sticking to his point of view. His problems were exacerbated, however, by the lack of proper and authoritative guidance from Warsaw. Most importantly, his means of leverage were very limited, as the Poles, having received the desired border line, did not want to lose it because of conflict over other, lesser issues. Realizing that the Soviets were absolutely determined not to accept the preliminary peace as a literal basis for their financial-economic obligations, he sensibly decided to concede on that score, trying to win good terms on the remaining issues. This tactic benefited greatly from a wave of severe internal disturbances in Russia, which forced the Bolshevik leadership to be somewhat conciliatory.

In the end, the definitive treaty was only partially implemented, as the Soviets skillfully prevented, to a greater or lesser extent, the full implementation of virtually every clause. In spite of this, many Polish subjects in Russia were

given the chance to repatriate, a significant proportion of Polish cultural treasures was returned, and the Soviets ended up paying the greater part of the amount owed by them for the Polish railroad rolling stock that was subject to reevacuation but actually remained in Russia.

The Soviet-Polish border was the only aspect of the Riga treaty that was fully implemented. It was also the most important one. The new border was internationally recognized by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors on 15 March 1923. Its full implementation and international recognition, however, did not necessarily testify to its durability.

Any threat to the Riga border certainly did not come from the Polish side, as Poles, overall, were satisfied with the peace treaty. Having concluded an "advantageous" territorial settlement, Warsaw was merely bent on keeping the Soviets at bay. As the chief of the Second Department put it, "if not preservation of the Bolshevik government, then maintenance of the state of chaos and economic ruin in Russia is in our interest. . . . Fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia is not our task—although we must fight them in the international arena to preserve further their isolation as much as possible."[1]

The Bolsheviks, however, did pose a threat, since, from their point of view, signing the treaty merely postponed their designs for world revolution. In a revealing assessment, the Polish Communist Party declared, right after the signing of the preliminaries: "This peace is neither durable nor true . . . mainly because it has been concluded by governments representing two deadly hostile social classes, the bourgeoisie and workers, one of which must fall, since both of them cannot simultaneously exist in the long run."[2] This appraisal was confirmed by a leading Bolshevik expert on Polish issues, who emphasized, in his report to Lenin, that "every peace with a bourgeois government is merely a breathing spell, based on the calculation of the correlation of forces at a given moment. . . . Such is the durability of peace with bourgeois Poland."[3]

Based on such assumptions, Moscow did not dismantle the Soviet Western Front in the wake of the treaty. The Politburo continued to refer to "the Polish front," arguing that "given the general state of affairs in Europe, circumstances are such that they can engender war and, therefore, the availability of serious military forces near the front is politically necessary." Things almost went that far in January 1923, when French troops entered the Ruhr region and war between France and Germany seemed likely. Poland, as France's ally, was bound to enter such a war. Having recognized this possibility, the Politburo decided "to urgently work out a mobilization plan . . . and a plan for concentration of necessary forces on the Western Front." Moreover, "a group

of executive political workers" was to be sent to the Western Military Region, this having always been a step preceding an offensive. At the same time, the Politburo resolved to spend enormous sums of money for the immediate purchase of military supplies from abroad, and to acquire military intelligence. It is therefore apparent that Moscow was bent on redrawing the Soviet-Polish border at the first suitable opportunity. Such an opportunity would be offered by a European war involving Germany.[4]

In the absence of such a war, the Soviets did their best to destabilize the Riga territorial settlement by fanning the flames not only of social revolution but also of national irredentism among Ukrainians and Belarusians, unhappy with their minority status in Poland. On the one hand, the Polish Constitution gave national minorities the right to their own schools and certain other institutions where their language and religion might freely be cultivated.[5] A significant number of Ukrainians and Belarusians even became members of Parliament.[6] On the other hand, the Constitution defined Poland as the state of the Polish Nation, thus implying that members of national minorities were second-class citizens. Accordingly, Ukrainians and Belarusians did not receive autonomy, even in the spheres of culture and education, and their languages could be used neither in the justice system nor in state or local administration. Given the expectations raised during the bygone era of federalism, many Ukrainian and Belarusian activists felt bitter and betrayed[7]—feelings that the Soviets were eager to exploit.

Moscow's policy of supporting Ukrainian and Belarusian irredentism necessitated the granting of a number of important concessions to the Soviet republics of Ukraine and Belarus. As a result, their national cultures began, relatively, to flourish. In the early 1930s, however, most of these concessions were withdrawn for internal reasons, and a severe crackdown on nationalism in both republics followed. Moscow's foreign policy was adjusted accordingly, resulting in the Soviet-Polish nonaggression pact of January 1932, which improved the international position of the Riga border.

This improvement was short-lived, however, as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 1939 spelled out the Soviet-German partition of Poland along the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San. Accordingly, the Red Army invaded Poland in mid-September 1939. The division of Poland was readjusted on Soviet initiative in late September, when Stalin exchanged the Lublin region lying west of the Bug river for the right to acquire Lithuania. As a result, the Soviet-German border of 1939–1941 resembled fairly closely the initial Soviet border proposal worked out by the Revolutionary-Military Soviet in July 1920. By contrast, the Soviet-Polish border established in 1945 followed in general

the Curzon line, and was somewhat less favorable to the Soviets. This border left the Białystok region on the Polish side—the only part of the Borderlands belonging to Poland today.

In spite of being short-lived, the Riga peace did not lack for significance. First of all, it decisively influenced the internal development of the two signatories to the treaty. On the one hand, it made Piłsudski forego plans for an East European federation and led to the adoption of the National-Democratic concept of Poland as a national state. As a result, it was not only the Ukrainian and Belarusian but also the Jewish and German minorities that were rather unhappy with their status in Poland. All of this contributed significantly to the discord, if not strife, between the Polish majority and the national minorities, so characteristic of interwar Poland. On the other hand, the Riga peace forced Lenin to abandon hope of an immediate European revolution and to focus primarily on building socialism in one country. It was Soviet military defeat, and the terms of the treaty, that compelled the Bolsheviks to create a clearly defined state, and determined which European nations it would contain. In the wake of the peace, the establishment of the Soviet Union as a nominal federation of national republics came as a logical conclusion.

According to Trotsky, the international significance of the Riga treaty lay mainly in erecting a barrier between Russia and Germany. This barrier between the two revisionist great powers gave a measure of stability to Eastern Europe. As Trotsky put it, "the Riga Treaty [not only] cut us off from Germany, but also . . . helped tremendously in the consolidation of bourgeois Europe. The counter-revolutionary character of the Riga Treaty and its influence on the fate of Europe becomes quite obvious if one imagines the course events might have taken . . . during 1923, if we had had a common frontier with Germany: there are innumerable reasons to think that the German developments would have shaped themselves in an entirely different manner."[8] Even assuming that the Communists would not have come to power in Germany, the possibility of cooperation between the two revisionist powers would have been much enhanced by the existence of a common border. The Rapallo treaty of 1922 between Germany and Russia might have taken on a whole new meaning in such a case. Indeed, it was the eventual collusion of the two powers that obliterated the Riga border in September 1939.

The stabilizing influence of the Soviet-Polish settlement is emphasized by the fact that only in the aftermath of its dismantlement were the borders between the Soviet Union and every other one of its western neighbors revised or obliterated. Moreover, as shown in Chapter IV, a Soviet conquest of Poland in 1920 would have immediately and seriously endangered the independence of at

least Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. That is why some Polish historians see the territorial system in East-Central Europe following the Soviet-Polish peace of 1921 as the Versailles-Riga system.

The linchpin of that system was Poland, the largest of the "small" states on the Soviet western border. The Poles well realized that their "advantageous" compromise settlement with Russia, the great power, was fraught with significance—not only for themselves but also for Eastern Europe. This assessment led them to the very optimistic conclusion that the Riga border assured Poland of a status greater than that of merely a regional power. Warsaw's foreign and internal policy in the interwar period was strongly influenced by that idea.[9]

The Versailles-Riga system spelled a paradoxical situation for Lithuania, which was extremely unhappy about the Riga treaty, since it allowed Poland to acquire Wilno; yet, it guaranteed that the country would not be Sovietized. Therefore, the end of the Riga peace also meant the end of independence for Lithuania.

For most of the Borderlands' inhabitants the Riga border came as a considerable nuisance, for it split the territory in an unprecedented way. It soon turned out, however, to be something of a blessing to those who lived to the west of it, regardless of whether they were Polish or not. All of them were spared the famine of 1921–1922 and the Great Famine of 1932–1933, which ravaged many areas of the Soviet Union, including the Southwestland. They also avoided the unheard-of political terror during the interwar years, suffered by local populations of the Soviet Borderlands regardless of nationality. In addition, the peasants in the Soviet Borderlands went through the horrors of forced collectivization in 1929–1931. To make matters worse, practically all Ukrainian and Belarusian national activists on the Soviet side were physically eliminated in the 1930s, especially during the Great Purges. Thus, the Riga border saved several million non-Polish inhabitants of the Borderlands from the worst excesses of Bolshevism and Stalinism.

It also saved, for a time, the majority of Borderlands Poles from the mass deportations and mass arrests which were the fate of their compatriots under Soviet rule, especially in the 1930s. In the wake of the Second World War, many Poles from the territories between the Riga border and the Curzon line were given the opportunity to "repatriate" to People's Poland. In this way, over 2 million Poles avoided direct Soviet rule.[10] The Borderlands Poles east of the Riga border were, by contrast, denied such an opportunity.

Two decades of stark contrast between Soviet and Polish rule on each side of the Riga border established it as an important divide, especially in terms of national consciousness. This was recognized by the Soviets themselves in

1939–1941, when the Riga border was retained as a strictly guarded internal border. Even today, this divide may still be observed. For instance, numerous elections in the 1990s show consistently that the strength of Ukrainian national feeling is much greater in West Volhynia than in the region of Zhitomir, or East Volhynia.[11] In Belarus, popular support for independence is much stronger west of the former Riga border than to the east, where such support hardly exists at all except in the capital city of Minsk, home to many arrivals from the western regions.

All in all, the Riga peace closed the period of two years of intense military and diplomatic struggle which resulted from two contrary grand imperial or geopolitical designs in regard to the Borderlands. The limited appeal of these schemes among the region's inhabitants forced both sides to rely on their own military strength as the main tool of implementation. The resulting war, and especially the campaigns of 1920, showed conclusively that neither side was able to defeat the other decisively. The Riga peace therefore became a logical compromise. Each side received the territories it considered vital; in addition, Polish people, cultural treasures, and property in Russia were partly returned. The durability of the territorial compromise was uncertain, however, in view of Moscow's continued pursuit of its grand imperial design, even though Warsaw dropped its federalist scheme with the signing of the peace.

While the Riga peace lasted only two decades, its significance was greater than meets the eye. The treaty influenced decisively the internal development of its two signatories, as it led to the establishment of the Soviet Union as a nominal federation of national republics and to the definition of Poland as a national state. By creating a physical barrier between the two revisionist great powers, the Soviet state and Germany, the Riga treaty had a stabilizing influence on all of Eastern Europe. As a divide between a country observing certain civil principles and one ruled by a ruthless totalitarian regime, the Riga border profoundly differentiated societies on both its sides. The results of this may be seen even today.

Maps

MAP 1. The Borderlands, Congress Poland, and Galicia, as of 1914.

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MAP 2. Extent of Polish Occupation in the Borderlands, late 1919–early 1920.

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MAP 3. Soviet-Polish Front Line, June and August 1920.

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MAP 4. Soviet Border Proposals, July 1920.

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MAP 5. Soviet Border Proposals, September 1920.

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MAP 6. The Riga Border of 1921.

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Polish and Russian Pronunciation

Basic Rules of Pronunciation

This book employs the Library of Congress system of Russian transliteration, except where other spellings are conventional (authors' names are spelled as they appear in the cited works). In theory, transliteration should facilitate proper pronunciation but with some features of the Library of Congress system that is not always the case. Here are some basic rules of pronunciation:

—"e" at the beginning of a word is usually pronounced as "ye" in "yes" (for instance, in such names as "Egorov");

—"ee" sounds similar to "aye" in "layer";

—"i" often sounds similar to "ee" in "see" but shorter; sometimes, however, it is pronounced as "y" in "yes" (for example, in such names as "Ioffe" and "Voikov");

—"ii" is pronounced as a very long "ee";

—"kh" is pronounced as "h" in "hall";

—"zh" is pronounced as "ge" in "garage."

Polish, though it uses the Latin alphabet, employs some modified Latin letters that are unknown in English; in addition, certain letters are pronounced differently. Basic rules of pronunciation are as follows:

—"ą" is a nasal sound, somewhat similar to "on" or "om," and very similar to the French "on" as in "bon";

—"c" sounds similar to "ts" in "cats";

—"c" preceding "i" is pronounced as "ć", see below;

—"ć" and "cz" are slightly different but they both sound similar to "ch" in "cheap";

—"ch" and "h" are pronounced by most Poles as "h" in "hall"; "h" is always pronounced;

—"dz" sounds similar to "ds" in "pads";

—"dż" is pronounced as "j";

—"ę" is a nasal sound, somewhat similar to "en," and very similar to French "in" as in "pin";

—"i" sounds similar to "ee" but shorter;

—"j" is pronounced as "y" in "yes";

—"ł" is pronounced as "w";

—"ń" sounds similar to the first "n" in "onion";

—"ó" and "u" are identical sounds, similar to "oo" in "look" but slightly longer;

—"rz" and "ż" are identical sounds, similar to "ge" in "garage";

—"s" preceding "i" is pronounced as "ś", see below;

—"ś" and "sz" are slightly different but they both sound similar to "sh" in "sheep";

—"w" is pronounced as "v."

Pronunciation of Polish and Russian Names

The following list gives approximate pronunciations of the more important Polish and Russian names. In Polish names, the stress is always on the second-last syllable; in Russian names, the stress is irregular.

Baranowicze	Bar-ran-nov-vee-cheh
Barlicki	Bar-leets-kee
Białowieża	Bya-wah-vye-zha
Białystok	Bya-wis-tock
Bug	Boog
Chełm	Helm
Dąbski	Domb-ski
Dmowski	Dmov-ski
Egorov	Yeg-gor-rov
Filipowicz	Fee-lee-pov-veech
Grajewo	Grah-yev-voh
Ioffe	Yof-feh
Karakhan	Kar-rah-han
Khar'kov	Har-kov
Kiernik	Kyer-neek
Kossakowski	Kos-sak-kov-ski
Krasin	Kras-seen
Krzemieniec	Ksheh-myen-nyets

Kuliński	Koo-leen-ski
Ładoś	Waad-dosh
Lida	Lee-dah
Łuniniec	Woo-nee-nyets
Lwów	Lvoov
Markhlevskii	Mar-hlev-skii
Manuil'skii	Man-noo-eel-skii
Matuszewski	Mat-too-shev-ski
Mikaszewicze	Mee-kah-sheh-vee-cheh
Mołodeczno	Mo-wod-dech-noh
Narutowicz	Nar-root-tov-veech
Niemen	Nye-men
Olszewski	Ol-shev-ski
Oszmiana	Osh-mya-nah
Paderewski	Pad-der-rev-ski
Patek	Pat-teck
Piłsudski	Peel-soots-kee
Polesie	Pol-les-sheh
Radek	Rad-deck
Równe	Roov-neh
Rozwadowski	Roz-vad-dov-ski
Rzeczpospolita	Zhech-pos-pol-lee-tah
Sapieha	Sap-yeh-hah
Sarny	Sar-nih
Skirmunt	Skeer-moont
Skrzyński	Skshin-ski
Skulski	School-ski
Śmigły-Rydz	Shmeeg-wir-Rits
Steczkowski	Stech-kov-ski
Suwałki	Soo-vow-kee
Święciany	Shven-chan-nih
Tukhachevskii	Too-ha-chev-skii
VTsIK	Veh-tseh-ee-kah
Wasilewski	Vah-she-lev-ski
Więckowski	Vyents-kov-ski
Wilejka	Vee-lay-kah
Wilno	Veel-noh
Witos	Vee-toss
Wołkowysk	Voe-kov-vysk
Wróblewski	Vroob-lev-ski
Zbrucz	Zbrooch
Żeligowski	Zhel-lee-gov-ski

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Geographical Terms

Białystok region	Included the counties of Białystok, Sokółka, and Bielsk of Grodno Province of the Northwestland. The only part of the Borderlands recognized by the Allies as Polish (on 8 December 1919).
Borderlands, The	Identical with the Westland.
Bug river	Separated much of Congress Poland from the Borderlands. It also separated the Chełm region from Volhynia.
Chełm region	Usually understood as identical with the short-lived Chełm Province, created in 1913 by the Russian authorities. It belonged to Congress Poland until early 1918, when the Central Powers turned it over to the Ukrainian People's Republic. Reacquired by Poland in late 1918.
Congress Poland	Established by the Vienna Congress of 1815 as a rump Polish state tied to Russia by personal union, it was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1831. Counted ten small provinces, including Suwałki.
Courland	A duchy within the *Rzeczpospolita*. It was part of neither the Grand Duchy of Lithuania nor Crown Poland. After the Great War, it became part of Latvia.
Crown Poland	One of the two main component states of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Identical with the Kingdom of Poland. Included ethnic Poland and Ukraine. Its capital was Warsaw. In Polish simply "Korona," literally "the Crown." The kingdom was so called because the term "Poland" was used to describe the entire *Rzeczpospolita*.
Dnieper Ukraine	The Southwestland together with Ukrainian and mixed Ukrainian-Russian territories under direct Russian rule before the Revolution,

	inlcuding the provinces of Chernigov, Poltava, Khar'kov, Ekaterinoslav, Kherson', and Tavrida (without the Crimea). The Southwestland lay on the Dnieper's right bank, while most of the remaining territories were found on its left bank; hence the appellation.
East Galicia	Territory of Galicia with a Ukrainian majority and a very significant Polish minority. The Ukrainian national movement demanded its separation from the western half of Galicia along the San river.
Galicia	Province of the Habsburg Empire (or Austria-Hungary), belonging to its Austrian half. Ethnically Polish-Ukrainian. Its capital was Lwów.
Grand Duchy of Lithuania	One of the two main component states of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Its capital was Wilno. It encompassed the territories of today's Lithuania and Belarus.
Historic Lithuania	Identical with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and nearly identical with the Northwestland. Encompassed ethnic Lithuania and ethnic Belarus.
Kongresówka	Polish term for Congress Poland.
Kresy Wschodnie	Polish term for the Borderlands.
Latgalia	The three northwesternmost counties (Daugavpils, Ludza, and Rezekne) of Vitebsk Province of the Northwestland. Ethnically Latvian. Historically, a part of the *Rzeczpospolita* known as Polish Livonia. Its most important town was Daugavpils.
Lwów	The capital of the province of Galicia. Lay in East Galicia. Had a Polish absolute majority.
Northwestland	The northern part of the Westland with its capital in Wilno. Included the provinces of Kaunas, Wilno, Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev. Its boundaries were nearly identical to those of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania.
Polesie Marshes	A gigantic strip of marshes stretching from the Bug river near Brest-Litovsk along the Prypeć river all the way to the Dnieper. It was a natural divide between the Northwestland and the Southwestland, and between Belarus and Ukraine.
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth	English term for the *Rzeczpospolita*.
Rzeczpospolita	The union of Crown Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; its capital was Warsaw.
San river	Claimed by the Ukrainian national movement to be a natural divide between East Galicia and the western half of the province.

Southwestland	The southern part of the Westland with its capital in Kiev. Included the provinces of Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia. Ethnically Ukrainian.
Vistula provinces	A deprecating term, used by Russian nationalists to describe Congress Poland.
Western Territory	See "Westland."
Westland	Separate administrative unit within the Russian Empire, encompassing the territories acquired in the partitions of Poland (1772–1795). It was subdivided into the Northwestland and the Southwestland.
West Volhynia	Western half of Volhynia Province, first recognized as Polish by the Polish-Ukrainian agreement of April 1920. Its most important town was Równe. Ethnically Ukrainian.
Wilno	The historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the capital of the Northwestland. Ethnically Polish-Jewish.
Zapadnyi krai	Russian term for the Westland.

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Abbreviations

Archives and Unpublished Document Collections

AAN	Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of New Records), Warsaw
ADM	Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej (Archive of Records Created Mechanically), Warsaw
AGND	Józef Piłsudski Institute of New York: Adiutantura Generalna Naczelnego Dowództwa (Archive of the High Command), Grupa I: Sprawy wojskowe (Group I: Military Affairs).
APAN	Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences), Warsaw
AVPRF	Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation), Moscow
BN	Biblioteka Narodowa (National Library), Warsaw
CAW	Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (Central Military Archive), Warsaw
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow
MHMSW	Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy (Historical Museum of the Capital City of Warsaw)
PCPW	Personal collections of Piotr Wandycz, New Haven, Conn.
RGASPI	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archive of Social-Political History, formerly the Central Party Archive), Moscow
RGVA	Rossiiskii Glavnyi Voennyi Arkhiv (Main Russian Military Archive), Moscow

TsKhIDK	Tsentral'noe Khranilishche Istorichesko-Dokumental'nykh Kollektsii (Center for the Preservation of Historico-Documentary Collections, also known as the Trophy Archive), Moscow
YUL	Yale University Library: British Foreign Office, Russia: Correspondence 1918–1921, microfilm

Published Document Collections

BNDO	Marek Tarczyński, ed., *Bitwa Niemeńska 29 VIII–18 X 1920: Dokumenty operacyjne*, Warsaw: Rytm, 1998.
BRP	A. V. Kvashonkin et al., eds., *Bol'shevistskoe rukovodstvo: Perepiska 1912–1927,* Moscow: Rosspen, 1996.
BSVB	*Bor'ba za sovetskuiu vlast' v Belorussii 1918–1920 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov v dvukh tomakh*, Minsk: Belarus', 1971.
BSVL	*Bor'ba za sovetskuiu vlast' v Litve v 1918–1920 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov*, Vilnius: Mintis, 1967.
DBFP	*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939: First Series, London: H. M. Stationery Office,* 1946– .
DiM	Weronika Gostyńska et al., eds., *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich*, Warsaw: KiW, 1957-.
DKF	*Direktivy komandovaniia frontov Krasnoi Armii 1917–1922 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov v 4 tomakh*, Moscow: VI, 1978.
DPPZ	Tadeusz Jędruszczak and Maria Nowak-Kiełbikowa, eds., *Dokumenty z dziejów polskiej polityki zagranicznej 1918–1939,* Warsaw: Pax, 1989.
DRW	Szymon Rudnicki and Piotr Wróbel, eds., *Druga Rzeczpospolita: Wybór tekstów źródłowych,* Warsaw: UW, 1990.
DVP	*Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR*, Moscow: GIPL, 1957– .
IBD	I. N. Kuznetsov and V. G. Mazets, eds., *Istoriia Belarusi v dokumentakh i materialakh,* Minsk: Amalfeia, 2000.
IIGV	*Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow, 1969.
KvPP	P. V. Kozlov et al., eds., *Krasnoarmeitsy v pol'skom plenu v 1919–1922 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Letnii sad, 2004.
ONGK	Marek Jabłonowski and Adam Koseski, eds., *O niepodległą i granice: Komunikaty Oddziału III Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego 1919–1921*, Warsaw: WSH, 1999.
ONGP	Marek Jabłonowski and Włodzimierz Janowski, eds., *O niepodległą i granice: Protokoły Komitetu Politycznego Rady Ministrów, 1921–1926*, Warsaw: WSH, 2004.

ONGR	Marek Jabłonowski, Włodzimierz Janowski, and Adam Koseski, eds., *O niepodległą i granice: Raporty i informacje Biura Propagandy Zagranicznej Prezydium Rady Ministrów 1920–1921*, Warsaw: WSH, 2002.
PROP	Artur Leinwand and Jan Molenda, eds., "Protokoły Rady Obrony Państwa," *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-radzieckich: Studia i materiały,* 1, 1965.
PSS	V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* Moscow: GIPL, 1959– .
PSV	I. I. Kostiushko, ed., *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920: Ranee ne opublikovannye dokumenty i materialy*, Moscow: RAN IBiS, 1994.
PTsK	G. M. Adibekov et al., eds., *Politbiuro TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b): Povestki dnia zasedanii 1919–1952*, Moscow: Rosspen, 2000.
PZ	Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe,* Warsaw: Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego, 1937–1938.
PW	Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma wybrane,* London: M. I. Kolin, 1943.
ROK	Jan Borkowski, ed., *Rok 1920: Wojna polsko-radziecka we wspomnieniach i innych dokumentach*, Warsaw: PIW, 1990.
SDFP	Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy 1917–1941,* London: Oxford University Press, 1951–1953.
SPKP	*Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r.: Dokumenty i materiały*, Warsaw: PWN, 1965.
SRP	Jerzy Kumaniecki, ed., *Stosunki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z państwem radzieckim, 1918–1943: Wybór dokumentów*, Warsaw: PWN, 1991.
SSPS	*Sprawozdania stenograficzne z posiedzeń Sejmu Ustawodawczego.*
SWW	Janusz Cisek, ed., *Sąsiedzi wobec wojny 1920 roku: Wybór dokumentów*, London: PFK, 1990.
TRPR	Weronika Gostyńska, ed., *Tajne rokowania polsko-radzieckie w 1919 r.: Materiały archiwalne i dokumenty*, Warsaw: PWN, 1986.
TTP	Jan M. Meijer, ed., *The Trotsky Papers, 1917–1922,* London: Mouton, 1964.
TUL	Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive,* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996.
UPD	Taras Hunczak, ed., *Ukraine and Poland in Documents, 1918–1922,* New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1983.
ZZD	Stanisław Alexandrowicz et al., eds., *Zwycięzcy za drutami: Jeńcy polscy w niewoli, 1919–1922; Dokumenty i materiały*, Toruń: UMK, 1995.

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Notes

Introduction

1. Where there is no generally accepted English form of a place name, its form officially used in 1921 is employed throughout this work. In particular, all 1921 Soviet place names are shown in their Russian versions, while Central Lithuanian place names are given in their Polish form. For convenience, geographical names in their various national forms are shown in the index.

Chapter I. *Early Diplomatic Contacts*

1. The term *Zapadnyi krai* is sometimes translated as Western Territory. However, the word *krai* is better translated as "land" than as "territory." In fact, the authoritative *Oxford Russian-English Dictionary,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, by Marcus Wheeler does not give "territory" as one of *krai*'s meanings at all. Moreover, in English usage, the word "territory" often denotes regions that are sparsely populated and relatively unimportant, for example, Canada's Northwest Territories or Australia's Northern Territory. By contrast, *Zapadnyi krai* was one of the more important and densely populated parts of the Russian Empire.

2. With the exception of the city of Kiev, which Russia formally acquired from Poland in 1667, and of the Białystok region, originally within the Prussian partition and gained by Russia in 1807.

3. Between 1385 and 1569, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were in personal union, i.e., were ruled by the same monarch.

4. After 1569, the Kingdom of Poland became known as Crown Poland, or *Korona,* while the term "Poland" was used to denote the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or *Rzeczpospolita*.

5. Latgalia, known before the partitions as Polish Livonia, never belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; it was a separate part of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

6. Quoted in Leon Wasilewski, *Polityka narodowościowa Rosyi,* Cracow: CBW NKN, 1916, 30. See also Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier 1863–1914,* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996, 71.

7. Weeks, *Nation and State,* 67. By "Russians" the Tsarist government understood not just "Great Russians" (ethnic Russians) but also "Little Russians" (Ukrainians) and "White Russians" (Belarusians). Indeed, the two latter "were seen as local variants of Russians and thus not as minority nationalities at all." (Ibid., 74; see also Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, 122.)

8. Leon Wasilewski, *Litwa i Białoruś: Zarys historyczno-polityczny stosunków narodowościowych,* Warsaw: J. Mortkowicz, 1925, 61–66; Jerzy Ochmański, *Litewski ruch narodowo-kulturalny w XIX wieku (do 1890 r.),* Białystok: BTN, 1965, 119.

9. Its results were published in N. A. Troinitskii, ed., *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g.,* St. Petersburg: TsSK MVD, 1903– . In this census, bilingual Polish-Belarusian respondents were apparently entered as Belarusian speakers.

10. By "significant minority" is meant here at least 20 percent of the total population.

11. The first quotation is from Weeks, *Nation and State,* 64, the second from the 1885 report of the governor general of Wilno, I. S. Kakhanov, as quoted ibid., 56.

12. Marian Świechowski, *Żywioł polski na ziemiach litewskich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem obszarów okupowanych przez mocarstwa centralne,* Zakopane, 1917. For instance, Catholic Belarusians, unlike Orthodox Belarusians, were not included in the curia of Russian voters in the elections to the Third Duma. Instead, they were included in the non-Russian curia, which in Wilno Province filled all its prescribed Duma seats with Polish members. Likewise, in the projected organ of local self-government, or zemstvo, for the provinces of Wilno and Grodno, Catholic Belarusians, in contrast to Orthodox Belarusians, were again not included in the category of Russian population. In the end, faced with the small number of Russians, including Orthodox Belarusians, as reported by the partial census of 1909 in these provinces, the Russian authorities abandoned altogether the very idea of introducing self-government there. (Włodzimierz Wakar, *Rozwój terytorialny narodowości polskiej: Część III, Statystyka narodowościowa Kresów Wschodnich,* Kielce, 1917, 15–16.)

13. Wakar, *Rozwój terytorialny: Część III,* 32, 35, 38, 42, 46, and 100; Edward Maliszewski, "Ze statystyki Litwy i Białorusi," *Wschód Polski,* no. 6–7, 1920, 52, as quoted in Roman Jurkowski, *Ziemiaństwo polskie Kresów Północno-Wschodnich, 1864–1914: Działalność społeczno-gospodarcza,* Warsaw: PW, 2001, 30; Piotr Eberhardt, *Przemiany narodowościowe na Litwie,* Warsaw: PW, 1997, 82–83; Eugeniusz Romer, ed., *Spis ludności na terenach administrowanych przez Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich (grudzień 1919),* Lwów: ZZW, 1920.

14. For example, at the outbreak of the Great War, there were in Galicia 2,510 Ukrainian elementary schools, 5 high schools, and 10 Ukrainian chairs at the University of Lwów. (Paul Robert Magocsi, "Ukraińcy Galicji pod rządami Habsburgów i Sowietów," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 97, 1991, 93–94.)

15. The Austrian general census of 1910 revealed in Galicia 4,676,000 Polish, 3,208,000 Ukrainian, and 90,000 German speakers among the total population of 7,984,000 people.

The existing ethnic divisions, however, were better reflected by the census results showing religious affiliation: 3,735,000 Roman Catholics, 3,378,000 Greek Catholics, and 873,000 Jewish believers. (S. Kasznica and M. Nadobnik, eds., "Najważniejsze wyniki spisu ludności i spisu zwierząt domowych, według stanu z dnia 31 grudnia 1910 r.," *Wiadomości statystyczne o stosunkach krajowych,* 24, 1911, xxv and 22–24.)

16. According to the general census of 1910, 2.1 million or 40 percent of the total population of East Galicia declared Polish as their everyday language (*Umgangsprache*), while 3.1 million or 59 percent of them declared Ukrainian. Polish speakers included all Roman Catholics as well as some Jewish believers and Greek Catholics. The number of Roman Catholics equaled 1.35 million or 25 percent of East Galicia's total population. In 14 of all the 52 counties of East Galicia, Roman Catholics made up around half the population. (Ludwik Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią 1914–1923,* Cracow: WSP, 1998, 16–20; Kasznica and Nadobnik, "Najważniejsze wyniki spisu," tables IV and XXIV.)

17. Michał Klimecki, *Polsko-ukraińska wojna o Lwów i Galicję Wschodnią 1918–1919,* Warsaw: Volumen, 2000, 6. According to the 1910 general census, Lwów was inhabited by 105,000 Roman Catholics, 57,000 Jewish believers, and 39,000 Greek Catholics. Thus, Roman Catholics made up 51 percent, and Greek Catholics 19 percent of the total population. Note that 45 percent of all these Greek Catholics declared Polish as their everyday language. (V. Okhrymovych, *Faktichni i fiktivni straty Rusinyv v demohrafichnym bilansi Halychyny za disiatyletiie 1900–1910: Statystychna rozvitka,* L'viv, 1912, 21; Kasznica and Nadobnik, "Najważniejsze wyniki spisu," 13–24, and tables III and IV.)

18. According to official Russian data, most likely inflated, for 1910. (Włodzimierz Wakar, *Rozwój terytorialny narodowości polskiej. Część II: Statystyka narodowościowa Królestwa Polskiego,* Warsaw, 1917, 176–177.) The Chełm region was a rather artificial creation of the Russian authorities, encompassing the easternmost parts of the provinces of Lublin and Siedlce. In 1913, the region was turned into the short-lived Chełm Province, and in the new Polish state it became part of Lublin Province.

19. The treaty was signed by the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Central Powers. The only monograph on it is Stephan M. Horak, *The First Treaty of World War I: Ukraine's Treaty with the Central Powers of February 9, 1918,* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1988. For its text, see Paul R. Magocsi, ed., *Texts of the Ukraine "Peace",* Cleveland, 1981. Poland reacquired the Chełm region soon after regaining independence in November 1918.

20. According to the Russian general census of 1897. The Belarusian national movement, however, claimed Smolensk Province to be a part of Belarus.

21. Ioffe to the Politburo, 21 May 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5.

22. Piotr S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, 3.

23. According to Leon Wasilewski, the first Polish foreign minister and Piłsudski's longtime collaborator. (Leon Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim Go znałem,* Warsaw: Rój, 1935, 60–61.)

24. George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin,* Boston: New American Library, 1961, 34.

25. *TUL,* doc. 59, 111.

26. "Theses on the Tactics of Peace Negotiations with Poland," 29 Dec. 1920, RGASPI 17/86/214/27–30.

27. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 23, 46.

28. *TUL*, doc. 59, 96.

29. *TUL,* doc. 51, 87, underlined by Lenin.

30. "Theses on the Tactics of Peace Negotiations with Poland," RGASPI 17/86/214/27–30.

31. "The Bolshevik negotiators made no effort during the negotiations to conceal their contempt for the German government and their determination to bring about its overthrow at the earliest possible moment by agitation among the rank and file of the German Army and the German working class. When the train bringing the Bolshevik delegation pulled into Brest-Litovsk, one of the Soviet delegates, Karl Radek, calmly stood at the train window throwing revolutionary pamphlets out to the German guards along the tracks. Later, at the negotiating table, Radek took special delight in a procedure which involved blowing pipe smoke into the face of the German commander, Major General Max Hoffmann, following this with long, silent, beady stares . . ." (Kennan, *Russia and the West,* 42.) The main Austrian negotiator at Brest-Litovsk, Count Ottokar Czernin, made the following observation about the Bolshevik negotiators: "My talk today with Joffe has shown me that these people are not honest, and in falsity surpass all that cunning diplomacy has been accused of." (Ottokar Czernin, *In the World War,* London: Cassell, 1919, 221.) For a monograph on the peace treaty between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers, see John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918,* New York: Norton, 1971.

32. Quoted in Philip Pomper, *Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin: The Intelligentsia and Power,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, 364.

33. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 12, 16–17; doc. 20, 22–23; and doc. 22, 24–25. The legation's treasury, including gold and diamonds, was seized by the Soviet government and apparently never returned. (Chicherin to Ioffe, 26 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/77.) The total number of personnel amounted to 477 people, including 83 staff in Moscow, 82 in St. Petersburg, and 28 in the provinces, together with their families. (RGASPI 143/1/105/9.)

34. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 26, 28–29; see also doc. 13, 17–18.

35. *ROK,* doc. 2, 11–12.

36. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 85–86.

37. *DiM,* vol. 2, 60–61 n. 7; doc. 44, 52–53; doc. 47, 57–60. The escort left the Bolshevik mission at the border station of the Polish gendarmerie at Łapy to be sent by train to German-held Białystok. However, the commandant of the station ordered his subordinates, some of whose families had been murdered by the Bolsheviks, to take the members of the mission away into the woods and execute them. The commandant was soon killed in action at the front. His subordinates and the chief of the escort received prison sentences in March 1920. (*Kurjer Warszawski,* 5 and 6 March 1920, morning edition.)

38. Article XII of the Armistice Agreement stipulated, though, that German troops on the Eastern Front were not to withdraw immediately but "as soon as the Allies shall think the moment suitable," having in view the Bolshevik danger. The Germans interpreted this formula as giving them the right to withdraw "gradually." (Quoted in Titus Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic: A Study in the Diplomatic History of Europe, 1914–1920,* Melbourne: W. Heinemann, 1957, 233–234.)

39. Artur Leinwand, "Wojna polsko-sowiecka w latach 1919–1920: Polityka i strategia stron walczących," in Andrzej Koryn, ed., *Wojna polsko-sowiecka 1920 roku: Przebieg walk*

i tło międzynarodowe, Warsaw: Gryf, 1993, 33. The names of the Bolsheviks who were not ethnic Russians are given in their Russian form and spelling, since that is how they are known outside their native countries. The native form is given in the index.

40. As Lenin wrote in January 1919, "now history has shown that it is the worldwide collapse of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism, that you cannot get anywhere without a civil war . . . The civil war in Germany and the struggle precisely along the lines of Soviet power against 'the universal, direct, equal, and secret ballot . . . '—this struggle in Germany is breaking through . . . and will succeed in breaking through." (*TUL,* doc. 33, 62; emphasis in the original.)

41. L. Trotskii, *Kak vooruzhalas' revoliutsiia,* Moscow, 1923–1924, vol. 1, 395; the quotation: 398.

42. A. S. Bubnov et al., *Grazhdanskaia voina 1918–1921,* Moscow: VV, 1928–1930, vol. 3, 136 and 153–154.

43. Adam Zamoyski, *The Battle of the Marchlands,* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981, 7; Bubnov, *Grazhdanskaia voina,* vol. 3, 152.

44. Quoted in Tadeusz Żenczykowski, *Dwa komitety 1920, 1944: Polska w planach Lenina i Stalina,* Paris: Spotkania, 1983, 12.

45. The difference, though, between the effective and total number of troops was usually very significant. For instance, in early October 1920 the Soviet Western Front totaled 431,591 men, of whom only 92,185 were effectives. (*DKF,* vol. 4, 200ff.)

46. Adam Przybylski, "Działania wstępne w wojnie polsko-rosyjskiej 1918–1920 r.," *Bellona,* 29, 1928, 6; Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919–1920,* London: Macdonald, 1972, 39.

47. Ioffe to Sverdlov, 22 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/149–150.

48. The medical faculty was closed down in 1840.

49. Troinitskii, *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis',* vol. 4: *Vilenskaia guberniia,* St. Petersburg, 1904. This bias is confirmed by the magisterial treatment of the census: Henning Bauer et al., eds., *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897,* vol. A: *Quellenkritische Dokumentation und Datenhandbuch,* Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1991, 172–173.

50. Eberhardt, *Przemiany narodowościowe na Litwie,* 83.

51. Alfred Erich Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, 51.

52. According to the memoirs of the finance minister, Martynas Yčas. (Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* 52.)

53. Bolesław Waligóra, *Na przełomie: Zdarzenia na ziemiach Białorusi i Litwy oraz w Krajach Bałtyckich 1918–1919,* Warsaw: WBH, 1934, 22–23.

54. Władysław Wejtko, *Samoobrona Litwy i Białorusi: Szkic historyczny,* Wilno, 1930, 17–21 and 33; AGND 31/T and 127/T.

55. Harry Kessler, *Tagebücher 1918–1937,* Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1961, 68–70.

56. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 69, 91, and especially 98 n. 7; Max Hoffmann, *Die Aufzeichnungen den Gen.-Majors Max Hoffmann,* Berlin, 1929, vol. 1, 223. The German Foreign Ministry was also sympathetic toward the Polish request. (AGND 113/T)

57. Waligóra, *Na przełomie,* 36. It so happened that on 27 December there broke out an uprising in the Polish-inhabited Poznań region, then still part of Germany, against German rule. The news of the outbreak, however, reached the German government on the morning

of the next day, so it could not have influenced its decision regarding the Polish request. (Przemysław Hauser, "Niemcy wobec Powstania Wielkopolskiego," *Siedemdziesiąta rocznica odzyskania niepodległości i wybuchu Powstania Wielkopolskiego: Materiały z konferencji odbytej 13–14 grudnia 1988 r. w UAM w Poznaniu,* Poznań: UAM, 1992, 120.)

58. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 37, 43. For the original of the note, dated 29 Dec. 1918, see AGND 179/T.

59. Wejtko, *Samoobrona Litwy i Białorusi,* doc. 6, 69–80.

60. *DiM,* vol. 2, 52 n. 3.

61. Piotr Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 1996, 32.

62. Grzegorz Łukomski and Rafał E. Stolarski, *Walka o Wilno: Z dziejów Samoobrony Litwy i Białorusi 1918–1919,* Warsaw: Adiutor, 1994, 36.

63. Waligóra, *Na przełomie,* 52–56.

64. Ioffe to Trotsky, 7 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/147–148. It is noteworthy that one of Ioffe's main tasks in Wilno was to organize a liaison with Communists in Berlin, including transport of literature and people on a large scale. (Ioffe to Sverdlov, 22 Feb. 1919, ibid./150.)

65. Żenczykowski, *Dwa komitety,* 13.

66. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 74, 108; the division's expansion: doc. 64, 79–81.

67. Quoted in I. V. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920 gg.,* Moscow: RAN ISiB, 1994, 56. Mikhutina emphasizes Chicherin's fears that the leading Polish Communists in Russia, then based in Wilno, were "ready to drag us into war with Poland." (Ibid.) His fears, however, are contradicted by Ioffe who, knowing the situation first hand, asserted that they "do not bear any criticism; someone has misled him. The Poles are fully loyal and share entirely the political line of our Central Committee." (Ioffe to Sverdlov, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, Chicherin, 22 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/149–150.)

68. Ia. M. Sverdlov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia,* Moscow: GIPL, 1957–1960, vol. 3, 137.

69. Ioffe to Sverdlov, 22 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/149–150; Ioffe to Trotsky, 7 Feb. 1919, ibid./147–148; *BSVL,* doc. 109, 151.

70. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 37, 43.

71. Jerzy Borzęcki, "Wyzwolenie Wilna w kwietniu 1919 roku w świetle dokumentów Adiutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowództwa," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 9:4 (36), 2005/2006, doc. 1, 850–852.

72. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 68 and nn., 85–90. It is noteworthy that France, and especially Marshal Ferdinand Foch, had applied intense pressure on Berlin to let Polish troops move against the Bolsheviks. (Ibid., 89 n. 4, and 98 n. 7.)

73. *ONGK,* doc. 62, 60.

74. *ONGK,* doc. 66, 64, and doc. 85, 82, respectively. On 22 February, however, Supreme Commander Vatsetis gave an order to the Western Front to go on the defensive. (Mikhutina, *Polsko-sovetskaia voina,* 59.)

75. *ONGK,* doc. 113, 109, and doc. 118, 113. For instance, Soviet troops withdrawing from the town of Szczuczyn appealed to the Poles "that they no longer wanted to fight on behalf of the Jews [i.e. the Bolsheviks] and asked them not to send pursuit units after them." (Ibid., doc. 95, 91.)

76. *ONGK*, doc. 149, 144; wavering: doc. 74, 72, doc. 99, 95, and doc. 162, 157.

77. Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star,* 47; *ONGK,* doc. 147, 142.

78. *ONGK,* doc. 77, 75; see also doc. 85, 82, and doc. 108, 104. Polish deserters from the Red Army reported: "The mood in the army bad; [Bolshevik] Poles would gladly surrender." (Ibid., doc. 162, 157.)

79. As Capt. Stanisław Rostworowski, the quartermaster of these Polish troops, recalled: "The material conditions were very difficult. The soldier, badly clothed and poorly armed, unable always to count on resupplies of ammunition unless he captured it in enemy trenches, fought bravely, however." (Stanisław Rostworowski, "Organizacja kwatermistrzostwa Frontu Litewsko-Białoruskiego," *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny,* 40:3–4, 1995, 184.) "To resupply equipment, there was only one way—capture from the enemy. Taking Bolshevik positions, the soldier of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Division could count on capturing a coat, boots, and underwear. One must admire the perseverance of the volunteer who, in these circumstances, did not desert but fought and won. At this time, the Bolshevik army was quite well equipped." (Ibid., 197.)

As evident from Polish operational communiqués, the Soviets had a fairly significant number of armored vehicles, trucks, airplanes, and several armored trains, against which the Poles could deploy apparently only one armored train and several airplanes. Moreover, Polish troops captured numerous Bolshevik stores of war materiel. At the same time, they themselves reported shortages of automobiles, supply trains, and gasoline. (Ibid., doc. 63, 62; doc. 80, 78; doc. 88, 84; doc. 90, 86; doc. 92, 88; doc. 96, 92; doc. 98, 94; doc. 100, 97; doc. 101, 98; doc. 105, 101; doc. 108, 104; doc. 109, 105; doc. 116, 112; doc. 117, 113; doc. 119, 115; doc. 120, 115–116; doc. 137, 131; doc. 138, 133; doc. 142, 136; doc. 143, 137; doc. 154, 149; and doc. 161, 156.)

80. *ONGK*, doc. 88, 84, and doc. 96, 92, respectively.

81. Waligóra, *Na przełomie,* 16.

82. *Leninskii Sbornik,* Moscow: IL, 1942, vol. 42, 53–54.

83. *BSVL,* 56–57.

84. Vitaut Kipel and Zora Kipel, eds., *Byelorussian Statehood: Reader and Bibliography,* New York: Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1988, 133–134.

85. Oleg Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923,* Białystok: BTH, 1995, 77.

86. Jerzy Turonek, *Wacław Iwanowski i odrodzenie Białorusi,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1992, 77.

87. *Księga Czerwona,* Moscow, 1921, 23.

88. *Izvestiia,* 277, 18 December 1919.

89. Iury Vesialkouski, *Belarus' u Pershai Sus'vetnai vaine: Histarychny narys,* Białystok, 1996, 189.

90. As Ioffe explained in January 1919 to the Bolsheviks at Minsk. (Mikhail I. Kulichenko, *Bor'ba kommunisticheskoi partii za reshenie natsional'nogo voprosa v 1918–1920 godakh,* Khar'kov, 1963, 249.)

91. Wiktor Sukiennicki, "Stalin and Byelorussia's 'Independence,'" *The Polish Review,* 10:3, 1965, 100. The quotation comes from the Manifesto of the Provisional Worker-Peasant Soviet Government of Belarus, brought from Moscow to Minsk and proclaimed there on 1 January 1919. (*IBD,* 341.)

92. Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe,* 113.

93. "Postanovlenie I s"ezda KP(b)B o granitsakh BSSR," in *IBD,* 339–340.

94. Vesialkouski, *Belarus' u Pershai Sus'vetnai,* 196; Turonek, *Wacław Iwanowski,* 78.

95. Soviet Lithuania's reluctance to merge with what was left of Soviet Belarus is documented by Bronius Vaitkevičius, *Socialistine revoliucija Lietuvoje 1918–1919 metais,* Vilnius: Mintis, 1967. See the review by Aleksy Deruga in *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-radzieckich: Studia i materiały,* 4, 1969, 197–203.

96. According to Mitskevich-Kapsukas, "Lenin appears to be the main initiator of that unification." (Quoted in Vesialkouski, *Belarus' u Pershai Sus'vetnai,* 200.)

97. Ioffe to Sverdlov, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Chicherin, 22 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/149–150.

98. *BSVB,* doc. 6, 38; *Izvestiia,* 47, 1 March 1919. Zhilunovich was arrested for "nationalist tendencies" in early February 1919. (Turonek, *Wacław Iwanowski,* 78.)

99. *BSVL,* doc. 167, 223; loans: doc. 181, 235–236, and doc. 188, 242, see also p. 110 (loans).

100. Alfonsas Eidintas, "The Nation Creates Its State," in Edvardas Tuskenis, ed., *Lithuania in European Politics: The Years of the First Republic 1918–1940,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, 36.

101. Quoted in Vesialkouski, *Belarus' u Pershai Sus'vetnai,* 203.

102. According to Marx, "national distinctions and contrasts are already tending to disappear more and more. . . . The rule of the proletariat will efface these distinctions and contrasts even more." (Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in D. Ryazanoff, ed., *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,* New York: Russell & Russell, 1963, 50.)

103. As Lenin put it, one should defend both "the real freedom of nations and the unity of workers of all nations." (*PSS,* vol. 19, 71–72.) There were, of course, excellent tactical reasons for this approach.

104. To help this process, in June 1920, Lenin recommended "sending to concentration camps in Russia all former members of the police, military, security forces, administration, et cetera, who were products of the tsarist era and who swarmed around Soviet power because they saw in it the perpetuation of Russian domination [over the formerly subject nationalities]." (*PSS*, vol. 41, 433–436.)

105. Lenin conveyed this idea by saying that "freedom of union presupposes freedom of secession. We, the Russians, must stress freedom of secession, and [the working class] in Poland the freedom of union." (*PSS*, vol. 24, 264–265.)

106. *Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov) v rezoliutsiiakh ee s"ezdov i konferentsii 1898–1922 gg,* Moscow, 1923, 235–236.

107. As Lenin declared in November 1918, "a complete victory of the Socialist Revolution is unthinkable in one country, and requires a most active participation of at least several leading countries, among which we cannot include Russia. Therefore, the question to what extent we will be able to spread the revolution over to other countries . . . has become one of the main questions of the revolution." (*PSS,* 3d, vol. 23, 261.)

108. *SDFP,* vol. 1, 111.

109. For instance, Lenin asserted on 14 December 1918: "Soviet power is a worldwide power. It comes to replace the old bourgeois state" (*PSS,* 4th, vol. 28, 331); on 21 January 1919: "the victory of Soviet power is going forward and broadening, growing and strengthening, over the whole world" (ibid., 414); on 6 March 1919: "The comrades who are present in this hall, . . . will all see the World-wide Federative Soviet Republic established" (ibid., 461); on 3 April 1919: "We are full of firm conviction that the proletariat of the whole world

has set foot on . . . the path of creation . . . of the workers' and toilers' power, and that there is no force in the world which can hold up the advance of the worldwide Communist Revolution to the worldwide Soviet Republic" (ibid., vol. 29, 235).

110. Trotskii, *Kak vooruzhalas' revoliutsiia,* vol. 1, 394.

111. Jurij Borys, *The Sovietization of Ukraine 1917–1923: The Communist Doctrine and Practice of National Self-Determination,* Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980, 209. The Directory was led by Symon Petliura and Volodymyr Vynnychenko, who competed with each other.

112. Quoted in P. Khristiuk, *Zamitki i materialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii 1917–1920,* Vienna, 1921–1922, vol. 4, 32–33.

113. Rakovskii argued that "ethnographic differences between Ukrainians and Russians are in themselves insignificant," that more important still "is the fact that among the Ukrainian peasantry there is a lack of . . . 'national consciousness,'" and that the Ukrainian industrial working class "is completely Russian in origin." He also pointed out that in the nine Ukrainian provinces, according to the 1897 general census, there lived "over two million Great Russians." (*Izvestiia,* 3 Jan. 1919, 1.)

114. Quoted, from his speech of February 1919, in Yaroslav Bilinsky, "The Communist Take-over of the Ukraine," in Taras Hunczak, ed., *The Ukraine 1917–1920: A Study in Revolution,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977, 118.

115. For the text of the constitution, see *Politika sovetskoi vlasti po natsional'nomu voprosu za tri goda 1917–1920,* Moscow, 1920, 113–116.

116. Arthur A. Adams, *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine: The Second Campaign 1918–1919,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963, 329–332. It is characteristic that the slogan "Workers of All Countries Unite!" printed on Soviet banknotes used in Ukraine, was written in Russian, German, English, Italian, French, Chinese, and Tatar, but not in Ukrainian. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 106.)

117. Quoted in *Politika sovetskoi vlasti po natsional'nomu voprosu,* 113–116.

118. A. Shlikhter, "Bor'ba za khleb na Ukraine v 1919 godu," *Litopys revoliutsii,* 2, 1928, 117 and 135.

119. Quoted in A. V. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine,* Moscow, 1924, vol. 4, 185.

120. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine,* vol. 4, 422.

121. As Antonov-Ovseenko, the commander of Red Army troops in Ukraine, put it, "it is necessary to incite strife between the Poles and the Galicians. This aim requires written and spoken agitation, to which all available Party forces must be enlisted." (Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine,* vol. 3, 262.)

122. As evident from the radio messages intercepted by the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks continued their secret contacts and negotiations with the East Galicians until the summer of 1919, when the latter were finally defeated by the Poles. (Mykola Lytvyn, "Pol's'ko-ukrains'kyi viis'kovo-politychnyi dialoh 1918–1920 rokiv: Vid zbroinoho konfliktu v Halychyni do soiuznykh Varshavs'kykh uhod," in Zbigniew Karpus et al., eds., *Polska i Ukraina: Sojusz 1920 roku i jego następstwa. Materiały z konferencji naukowej,* Toruń: UMK, 1997, 249–250.)

123. *ROK,* doc. 10, 20–22. According to estimates by the People's Commissariat for the Nationalities, in 1918 there were in Russia 5 million refugees from Congress Poland and

the western part of the Borderlands, including 1.5 million ethnic Poles. (Walentyna Najdus, *Polacy w rewolucji 1917 roku,* Warsaw: PWN, 1967, 46–47.)

124. *BSVL,* 56–57; *BSVB,* vol. 2, 20.

125. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 76, 109–111; see also doc. 83, 122–123.

126. *ROK,* doc. 15, 40–41.

127. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 70, 100; *TRPR,* doc. 6, 27.

128. *TRPR,* doc. 8, 28–29, see also doc. 10, 33; doc. 11, 34.

129. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 122, 231–232, and doc. 105, 201–202 (first offer).

130. Presenting peace offers just to make it more difficult for the enemy to prepare an offensive appears to have been one of Soviet diplomacy's regular tactics. As Chicherin argued on another occasion, "obviously . . . negotiations . . . will lead to nothing, but . . . under the conditions of peace negotiations it will be impossible for Finland to create at home a psychology suitable for an offensive. Peace negotiations will serve as a bridle, which is what we need now. . . . A peace offer . . . at a given moment will hamper our enemies and cool down Finnish chauvinism." Lenin and the Politburo agreed with this argument. (Politburo session of 11 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/77, Attachment: Chicherin to Lenin on Finland.)

131. See Chapter II.

132. *Monitor Polski,* 15 May 1919, quoted in *TRPR,* 39 n. 2; see also doc. 13, 38–39.

Chapter II. *Failed Negotiations*

1. Adam Przybylski, "Ofensywa na Wilno w kwietniu 1919 roku," *Bellona,* 32, 1928, 6. To maintain secrecy, Piłsudski preferred his crucial operations to be prepared by his skeleton military staff, including only three senior officers, rather than by the entire General Staff.

2. *ROK,* doc. 17, 44. This resolution was moved by Jan Dąbski on behalf of the "Piast" Peasant Party.

3. Mieczysław Wrzosek, *Wojny o granice Polski Odrodzonej 1918–1921,* Warsaw: WP, 1992, 192.

4. Piotr Łossowski, *Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 1966, 77. See also *ONGK,* doc. 163, 158, and Ioffe to Trotsky, 30 March 1919, AVPRF 28/1/79/13–22.

5. Stanisław Rostworowski, "Organizacja kwatermistrzostwa Frontu Litewsko-Białoruskiego," *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny,* 40:3–4, 1995, 188–189; Przybylski, "Ofensywa na Wilno," 105.

6. *ONGK,* doc. 177, 170.

7. Przybylski, "Ofensywa na Wilno," 115.

8. Jerzy Borzęcki, "Wyzwolenie Wilna w kwietniu 1919 roku w świetle dokumentów Adiutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowództwa," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 9:4 (36), 2005/2006, doc. 7, 861–865.

9. German troops had dug them in October 1915 and stayed in them until October 1917. In Belarus, the trenches ran east of Oszmiana, Lida, Nowogródek, Baranowicze, and Pińsk.

10. *ONGK,* doc. 75, 73, doc. 190, 179, and doc. 90, 86 (welcome celebrations); doc. 133, 127 (Bolshevik terror); and doc. 65, 64 (Bolshevik sympathizers).

11. *ROK,* doc. 20, 47. While the report, dated 13 April 1919, describes the situation in the Southwestland, one may assume that the mood of the Orthodox population in the Northwestland was very similar.

12. According to a Polish intelligence report by Karol Wędziagolski, quoted in I. V. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920 gg,* Moscow: RAN ISiB, 1994, 43.

13. *ONGK,* doc. 75, 73, and doc. 115, 111 (Polish lack of propaganda apparatus); doc. 142, 136, doc. 143, 137, doc. 145, 139, and doc. 160, 155 (guerilla war in Polesie); doc. 65, 64, and Ioffe to Sverdlov, 22 Feb. 1919, RGASPI 325/2/27/149–150 (Bolshevik arming the peasants).

14. *ONGK,* doc. 96, 92.

15. It is significant that Jews themselves shared the widespread perception that ethnically Jewish activists were the driving force behind the Bolshevik movement. For instance, Jews joked that VTsIK, the abbreviation for the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which was theoretically the highest organ of state authority in Soviet Russia, stood really for the Yiddish phrase *vu tsen idn komanden,* meaning "where ten Jews are in command." In fact, in 1917, about 30 percent of the Central Committee members were Jewish. (Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times 1917–1920,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and Center for Jewish Studies, 1999, 112; Zvi Y. Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPSU, 1917–1930,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, 118.)

16. *TUL,* doc. 42, 77, and doc. 61, 117. To express it "politely," as he put it, Lenin meant here "Jewish petty bourgeoisie."

17. For instance, at the Politburo session of 3 June 1920, both Trotsky and A. P. Rozengol'ts noted widespread anti-Semitism in the Red Army (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 57, 114); *ONGK,* doc. 99, 95, and doc. 113, 109; for countless examples of Soviet troops' indiscipline, see I. Babel, *1920 Diary,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

18. The Red Army committed 106 pogroms, killing 725 Jews. The Polish Army was responsible for 32 pogroms, in which 134 Jews were murdered. To put these numbers in perspective, in 1918–1920, various troops operating in Ukraine committed around 1,300 pogroms in total, murdering at least 31,000 Jews. Around 80 percent of all these pogroms took place in the Southwestland. The forces of the Directory and its affiliates (including Petliura's troops) are blamed for the majority of both pogroms and victims. Among all the various troops involved, the Polish Army was responsible for the smallest number of pogroms and victims. (Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government,* 113, 118, and 120.)

19. Harry G. Shaffer, *The Soviet Treatment of Jews,* New York: Praeger, 1974, 5–8. Adol'f Ioffe, in his capacity as Moscow's chief overseer in Belarus and Lithuania, reported to Trotsky, for example, that "in Slonim, which had just liberated itself from the Germans and greeted us like brothers, the local Revolutionary Committee [Revkom] acts like in a conquered land. It laid the town under contribution of such magnitude that even if the whole town pawned all the women and children [*sic*], it still would not be able to gather [the demanded amount], while to secure the payment of the contribution, the Revkom put in jail nearly half the town. The Revkom at Mozyr' laid the town under contribution of half a million, and then contented itself with the amount of 400,000." (Ioffe to Trotsky, 30 Jan. 1919, AVPRF 28/1/79/7–8.)

20. *ONGK,* doc. 137, 131. According to Ioffe, Bolshevik soldiers habitually robbed local peasants. "Soldatov with his detachment, for instance, carry on disgracefully in the Slutsk region, levy contributions, simply rob and plunder to the extent that the local peasants whisper among themselves that robbers and the Bolsheviks are apparently the same

thing. The 17th Mozhaisk Regiment with its commander, Semenov, compete in this regard with the said Soldatov in about the same region. . . . In Lida County, the Siedlce Regiment of the so-called Northwestern Division commits excesses in the same manner as the Mozhaisk Regiment here." (Ioffe to Trotsky, 30 Jan. 1919, AVPRF 28/1/79/7–8.)

21. V. Mitskevich-Kapsukas, "The Causes of the Fall of the City of Wilno," *Izvestiia,* 27, 8 May 1919; *DiM,* Appendix VI, 771–773.

22. For instance, an operational communiqué from Gen. Listowski's group reported from one locality: "Ukrainians thank on their knees for a piece of bread which our soldiers share with the population dying from hunger." (*ONGK,* doc. 90, 86.)

23. Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, a Socialist M.P., very critical of Polish methods of government in the Borderlands and familiar with the territory, maintained in Parliament that "in the beginning, Polish troops were greeted with great enthusiasm." (*ROK,* doc. 44, 92.)

24. As the Polish High Command reasoned on 3 May 1919: "The secret documents of the German government that have been received point out that if the Germans find the terms of peace to be too severe—they will not accept them and will start a new war against the Coalition. In this case, we would likewise be forced to conduct war against Germany, first and foremost in defense of our borders, but also as the Coalition's allies." (AGND 796/T.) For more on the topic, see Piotr Łossowski, *Między wojną a pokojem: Niemieckie zamysły wojenne na wschodzie w obliczu traktatu wersalskiego, marzec-kwiecień 1919 roku,* Warsaw, 1976.

25. RGASPI 17/3/11, together with Attachment II.

26. Even in February and March 1919, when they were officially called Ukrainian, Bolshevik troops in Ukraine were mostly ethnically Russian. For instance, three out of four divisions stationed in Kiev "had been formed in Russia, and are in fact Russian, while the fourth one is the Tarashcha Division which at Chernigov betrayed the [Ukrainian] Directory and went over to the Bolshevik side." (*DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 85, 131.)

27. *PSV,* vol. 1, 21–22 n. 1.

28. Eriks Jekabsons, "Powstanie niepodległej Łotwy, jej położenie w regionie oraz stosunki z Polską w latach 1918–1920," in Andrzej Ajnenkiel, ed., *Rok 1918: Odrodzona Polska w nowej Europie,* Warsaw: Neriton, 1999, 170.

29. Once conscription was introduced in Poland proper in March 1919 by vote of Parliament, desertion inevitably appeared also in the Polish Army. However, with the exception of July and August of 1920, it was never a major problem, as can be seen from the largely symbolic countermeasures employed. For instance, an interpellation in Parliament alleged that in Zamość County deserters, "with impunity, appear openly in public with the knowledge of local authorities." (*DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 154, 285 n. 1.) In reply, dated 16 June 1919, the Military Gendarmerie Command, officially charged with investigation of desertion, declared themselves well-nigh helpless in this case and suggested that members of Parliament explain to the population the "pernicious results of desertion." (Ibid., doc. 154, 285.) Moreover, a report of 22 March 1920 revealed that although the police did participate in investigations of desertion, their work was "neither very thorough nor scrupulous because the police have no right to interfere with military personnel unless crime is involved, and *whether desertion is a crime or just an offence has not yet been resolved*." (CAW 1772/89/241/60; my emphasis.) At about the same time, military reports confirmed that, overall, the soldier was disciplined and showed "willingness to defend the Fatherland to the last drop of blood." (CAW 1772/89/241/1/110; see also ibid., 112.)

30. Most of them were American citizens of Polish origin.

31. At Bobruisk, tanks were used for the first time in the war. With the help of fifteen tanks of the 1st Tank Regiment, formed in France, the Poles were able to take the fortress on 28 August. (Zdzisław G. Kowalski, *Szablą i piórem: Wojna polsko-bolszewicka 1919–1920 na łamach polskich fachowych periodyków wojskowych,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2000, 39.)

32. Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919–1920,* London: Macdonald, 1972, 60–61; Wrzosek, *Wojny o granice,* 241–242.

33. *TRPR,* doc. 39, 91, and doc. 88, 231.

34. Stephan Horak, ed., *Poland's International Affairs, 1919–1960,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964, doc. 11, 223; *ROK,* doc. 1, 11.

35. For Piłsudski's genealogical tree, going back to the sixteenth century, see Anna Borkiewicz-Celińska, "Muzeum Józefa Piłsudskiego w Belwederze (1935–1939)," *Niepodległość,* vol. 50, 1999, 240.

36. Józef Piłsudski, *Year 1920 and Its Climax: Battle of Warsaw during the Polish-Soviet War 1919–1920,* London: Piłsudski Institute of America, 1972, 200. His overriding aim was well put in the March 1920 communiqué of the Volhynia Front to its commanders and chiefs of staff, written under his guidance. It states: "The Chief of State and the Polish government stand for absolute weakening of Russia to lessen the danger posed to Poland by Russia, whether Bolshevik or monarchist." (*SWW,* part 8, doc. 1, 159; emphasis in the original.)

37. This was Piłsudski's long-standing idea, expressed already in his memorial submitted to the Japanese government in 1904, where he declared his faction's political goal to be "the disintegration of the Russian state into its main elements and freeing the countries forcibly included in the Empire. This we consider not only as a fulfillment of our fatherland's cultural strivings for an independent existence, but also as a guarantee of that existence because Russia, dispossessed of its conquests, will be so weakened that it will no longer be a threatening and dangerous neighbor." (*PZ,* vol. 2, 253.)

38. For an instructive essay on Piłsudski's plans for destroying Russia as a multinational empire, see Andrzej Nowak, "Niepodległa polityka wschodnia: Józef Piłsudski," in his *Jak rozbić Rosyjskie Imperium: Idee polskiej polityki wschodniej 1733–1921,* Cracow: Arcana, 1999, 317–355.

39. According to Wasilewski, Piłsudski's close collaborator on his policy toward the Borderlands, the Polish leader's "plans in the east were related to his concept of 'Great Poland,' requiring liberal treatment of . . . its eastern neighbors, who should gather and assemble around 'Great Poland,' as their natural protector against the Russian threat." (Leon Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim Go znałem,* Warsaw: Rój, 1935, 172–173.)

40. According to its Paris program, the party's goal was to create a new Socialist Poland by freeing it from Russia's "eastern despotism" and separating Polish society from its Russian counterpart, described as "foreign to it and standing at a low level of development." The party's sphere of activity was to encompass "the provinces formerly bound with the Polish *Rzeczpospolita,*" so that the Borderlands would be included into the future "independent, democratic *rzeczpospolita*" on the basis of full equality and voluntary federation. ("Szkic programu Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej," *Przedświt,* 5, 1893, 2.)

41. As of late January 1919, the National Democrats commanded 116 parliamentary seats out of a total of 340. Subsequently, this proportion further improved in their favor.

42. As opposed to the Russian-Eastern culture.

43. *SPKP,* vol. 1, 90.

44. The so-called Dmowski line, proposed by him at the Paris Peace Conference as the Polish eastern border, would have given Poland the provinces of Wilno and Grodno, most of Minsk Province, West Volhynia, and the westernmost part of Podolia. It is reasonable to assume that he purposely made an exaggerated claim, anticipating that some of the requested territories would not be granted. Consequently, his ideal Polish eastern border might have been to the west of this line. In any case, the Dmowski line was roundly rejected by the Big Four.

45. *SPKP,* vol. 1, 85.

46. Quotations from *PZ,* vol. 6, 122.

47. As he said in early February 1919. (Władysław Baranowski, *Rozmowy z Piłsudskim, 1916–1931,* Warsaw, 1938, 124.) As Kazimierz Świtalski, Piłsudski's adjutant and close collaborator on the issue of the Borderlands, noted in his diary in December 1919, "the incorporationist and federalist concepts should not be viewed as fundamentally opposed. One does not exclude the other; the point is that one should be able to put forth the federalist solution first, so that in case it is impossible to carry it out, there does remain another way out." (Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz 1919–1935,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1992, 40.) Obviously, any public declaration in favor of federalism would anger the Allied Powers, which Poland could ill afford.

48. In a letter to Wasilewski of April 1919, Piłsudski wrote: "You know my views in this regard, . . . I want to be neither [incorporationist] nor federalist so long as I can't talk about these matters with some seriousness—and a revolver in my pocket. Since in this world of ours talk about the brotherhood of men and nations seems to be winning out, as well as American palavering, I gladly lean toward the federalists." (Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski,* 175–176.)

49. *PW,* 180–181.

50. *PW,* 176–177; *PZ,* vol. 5, 75–76.

51. Eugeniusz Romer, "O Litwie historycznej i woli jej mieszkańców," *Wschód Polski,* 2, January 1920, 19.

52. Jan Jurkiewicz, *Rozwój polskiej myśli politycznej na Litwie i Białorusi w latach 1905–1922,* Poznań: UAM, 1983, 197.

53. *SSPS,* 29 April 1919.

54. Alfred Erich Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, 114.

55. The elections were to be carried out "on the basis of the universal, direct, equal, secret, and proportional electoral law." For the text of the motion, see Piotr Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* Warsaw: KiW, 1996, 54.

56. West Volhynia had been under the Civil Administration in Wilno until January 1920, when it was reestablished as a separate Civil Administration with its own Commissioner General.

57. According to Osmołowski himself. (*ROK,* doc. 155, 367 and 372.) For a monograph on the Civil Administration, see Joanna Gierowska-Kałłaur, *Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich, 19 lutego 1919—9 września 1920,* Warsaw: Neriton, 2003.

58. Quoted in Wiktor Sukiennicki, "O oddźwięk w sercu," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 28, 1976, 102.

59. As Iury Vesialkouski observes in his *Belarus' u Pershai Sus'vetnai vaine: Histarychny narys,* Białystok, 1996, 169, Piłsudski failed to define clearly what he meant by "this land." The first and last sentence of his short speech would indicate, however, that he meant the Minsk region.

60. *PW,* 186–187.

61. Quoted in Sukiennicki, "O oddźwięk w sercu," 110.

62. Quoted in *Krótki zarys zagadnienia białoruskiego,* Warsaw, 1928, 85, a manuscript prepared by the Second Department for internal use.

63. The Lutskevich government received 4 million marks from Berlin in March 1919. (Oleg Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923,* Białystok: BTH, 1995, 94.) This was ostensibly a loan from the beleaguered Ukrainian People's Republic, even though it could hardly part with that amount of money, given especially that the Belarusians had obviously no means or ability to repay the loan.

64. Kazimierz Świtalski, ed., "Listy Józefa Piłsudskiego," *Niepodległość,* 7, 1962, 69–71. In 1858, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, in seeking to unify Italy under its leadership, had acquired French support for annexing Austrian-held Lombardy and Venetia at the price of Savoy and Nice which became French. Likewise, Piłsudski expected the Belarusians to give up their claim to the regions of Wilno and Grodno in exchange for Polish support for a Belarusian national entity in the region of Minsk and possibly farther to the east.

65. Krystyna Gomółka, *Między Rosją a Polską: Białoruś w koncepcjach polskich ugrupowań politycznych 1918–1922,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1994, 77–78.

66. As a well-known supporter of the federalist concept bitterly admitted, "in its reasoning, the National Democracy is right regarding one thing—the overwhelming majority of the Polish population of [historic] Lithuania wants at the moment simple incorporation into Poland." (Tadeusz Hołówko, "Zadanie Polaków na Litwie," *Robotnik,* 6 May 1919.)

67. Quoted in Józef Lewandowski, *Federalizm: Litwa i Białoruś w polityce obozu belwederskiego, XI 1918–IV 1920,* Warsaw: PWN, 1962, 228.

68. Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe,* 121–146.

69. Piłsudski to Gen. Rozwadowski, 28 Nov. 1918, quoted in Andrzej Nowak, "Polityka wschodnia Józefa Piłsudskiego (1918–1921): Koncepcja i realizacja," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 107, 1994, 10.

70. To Piłsudski, the main issue was to deal with the Russian danger, and from this vantage point he regarded the war in East Galicia as "unfortunate" and "unnecessary." (Piłsudski to Paderewski, 31 May 1919, in *UPD,* vol. 1, doc. 38, 140; Piłsudski to Gen. Rozwadowski, 28 Nov. 1918, in Nowak, "Polityka wschodnia Józefa Piłsudskiego," 10.) Yet, Polish military involvement in East Galicia could not be avoided for reasons that are outside the scope of this study.

71. *UPD,* vol. 1, doc. 31, 122–124; *DiM,* vol. 2, 259; Piotr S. Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej w latach 1919–1920," in his *Polska a zagranica,* Paris: IL, 1986, 25; originally published in *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 12, 1967.

72. Teleprinter conversation between Capt. Potocki and Capt. Rozwadowski of 16 July 1919, AGND 1130/T1.

73. I. Mazepa, *Ukraina v ohni i buri revoliutsii 1917–1921,* Prague, 1942–1943, vol. 2, 59.

74. *UPD,* vol. 1, doc. 66, 237–238; Piotr Wandycz, "Nieznane listy Petlury do Piłsudskiego," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 8, 1965, 182–183.

75. Adolf Juzwenko, *Polska a "biała" Rosja (od listopada 1918 do kwietnia 1920 r.),* Wrocław: ZNiO, 1973, 202–203; Jan Jacek Bruski, *Petlurowcy: Centrum Państwowe Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej na wychodźstwie (1919–1924),* Cracow: Arcana, 2000, 114–115.

76. According to a Polish estimate, in September 1919, Petliura's own Dnieper Ukrainian troops counted 10,000 men, while his East Galician troops numbered 80,000 to 90,000. (*UPD,* vol. 1, 367.)

77. Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej," 26.

78. High Command directive of 25 Aug. 1919; see Nowak, "Polityka wschodnia Józefa Piłsudskiego," 11.

79. Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 94–95 and 117 (trade agreement).

80. M. Omelianovych-Pavlenko, *Zymovyi pokhid,* Kalisz, 1934, 3.

81. Maj. Piskor to Piłsudski, 19 Nov. 1919, AGND 1886/T1.

82. Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku: Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920,* Toruń: UMK, 1999, 20.

83. Algis Kasperavičius, "Kształtowanie się litewskich struktur państwowych i problem porozumienia się z Polską," in Ajnenkiel, *Rok 1918: Odrodzona Polska,* 132–133.

84. Alfred Erich Senn, *The Great Powers, Lithuania, and the Vilna Question 1920–1928,* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966, 4.

85. For the text of the memorial, see Michał Römer, *Litwa: Studium o odrodzeniu narodu litewskiego,* Lwów, 1908, 428. At the Paris Peace Conference, Lithuania made a claim to the provinces of Wilno, Grodno, Kaunas, and Suwałki, as well as parts of Courland and East Prussia. (Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* 120.)

86. Quoted, respectively, in Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 14, and Senn, *The Great Powers, Lithuania, and the Vilna Question,* 5. According to one of the leading Lithuanian national activists, Mykolas Biržiška, "the issue of belonging to a certain nationality is not decided by everyone at will, it is not a matter that can be resolved according to the principles of political liberalism, even one cloaked in democratic slogans." (*Echo Litwy,* 25, 31 January 1920.) Another leading activist, Petras Klimas, had already declared in September 1917: "Giving the right of self-determination to the inhabitants of Wilno, a population devoid of culture, would mean giving an opportunity to agitators to fool people. The thing is to unite former branches with the old trunk. Based on that, we draw the border far beyond Wilno, near Oszmiana. Lida County is also Lithuanian . . ." (Quoted in Kasperavičius, "Kształtowanie się litewskich struktur państwowych," 131.)

87. Quoted, respectively, in Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* 108, and Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 46.

88. These attempts were made through visits in Kaunas by Michał Römer, Zygmunt Jundziłł, Stanisław Staniszewski, and Wasilewski, as well as during the visit of Jurgis Šaulys to Warsaw. (Jerzy Ochmański, "Kulisy wyprawy wileńskiej Piłsudskiego," *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-radzieckich,* 3, 1968, 70–71; Zygmunt Jundziłł, "Niefortunna wyprawa kowieńska," *Niepodległość,* 5, 1955, 207–211; Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* 113 and 117–118; Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 38–39 and 56–57; see also the interview with Piłsudski in a Paris daily, *Journal des Débats,* 13 May 1919.)

89. Quoted in Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski,* 176–177.

90. *TRPR,* doc. 22, 53–54, and doc. 26, including documents quoted in 58–61 nn. 10 and 11,; doc. 21, 52–53 (arrival in Moscow); doc. 20, 51–52, including n. 2 (contacts with the Poles).

91. Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe,* 114.

92. *TRPR,* doc. 39, 89–90; 92–93 (Piłsudski's reasoning); doc. 33, 75–76 (crossing the front line).

93. Polish civilian prisoners were citizens of the former Austria-Hungary detained in 1915 by the tsarist authorities after the Russian conquest of much of Galicia, and subsequently sent into the depths of Russia. It is unclear who Russian civilian prisoners in Poland were.

94. Michał Stanisław Kossakowski, *Diariusz* (manuscript), vol. 4, 33, APAN.

95. *PSV,* vol. 1, 37 n. 1.

96. Więckowski had died of a contagious disease in September 1919.

97. *TRPR,* doc. 56, 158; see also doc. 52, 144–145.

98. Markhlevskii to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1919, RGASPI 143/1/103/3–4.

99. *TRPR,* doc. 57, 159–161.

100. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 1, 275 and 277.

101. This was a dubious claim, considering that as recently as 15 September 1919 Markhlevskii co-signed a memorial to the Bolshevik Party's Central Committee recommending that "agitation among Polish workers cannot be curtailed; on the contrary, it ought to be increased." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 7, 28.)

102. *TRPR,* doc. 60, 167–168.

103. According to Markhlevskii's notes. (Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 1, 275–276.) Kossakowski, however, informed Piłsudski that "the Bolshevik government . . . is willing to declare a complete *désintéressement* with regard to Lithuania and Belarus, contenting itself with an assurance that the principles embraced in the [Wilno] manifesto [of 22 April 1919] would be implemented. In exchange, Soviet Russia desires a reciprocal *désintéressement* by the Poles with regard to its war against Kolchak and Denikin." (*TRPR,* 162 n. 1.) Thus, there is a fairly significant difference between these two accounts.

104. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 1, 275–276.

105. *TRPR,* doc. 60, 167–168.

106. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 2, 279–280; emphases in the original.

107. Markhlevskii to the Bureau of the Polish Communist Party in Moscow, 1 Nov. 1919, RGASPI 143/1/106/1; emphasis in the original.

108. *TUL,* doc. 1A, 179–180; Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 4, 283–284. On 29 October, Markhlevskii wrote to Chicherin: "The unofficial representative of Piłsudski, Boerner, declares that the Poles will not advance. They want Denikin's defeat and give their assurance that [our] troops can be withdrawn from the front. I think one can trust them." (RGASPI 143/1/103/7.)

109. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 5, 286; doc. 6, 288; and doc. 7, 290.

110. According to Markhlevskii. (RGASPI 2/1/24393/3–5.) According to Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska 1920 roku,* Warsaw: GiW, 1937, 26–27, it was on 6 November. For the text of the agreement, see *TRPR,* doc. 76, 199–202.

111. The former quotation: Markhlevskii's notes, RGASPI 143/1/105/4–5, emphasis in the original. See also Boerner's notes in *TRPR,* doc. 79, 203–205. Markhlevskii's notes

contain eight points, while those of Boerner contain only seven, as they miss the point on negotiations with Denikin. The latter quotation: ibid., doc. 79, 204.

112. Andrzej Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje: Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku),* Cracow: Arcana, 2001, 398–399. In addition to the Borderlands, Denikin claimed East Galicia. (Ibid., 399.) The complicated relations between Poland and the White Russians are also dealt with by Juzwenko, *Polska a "biała" Rosja.* For Denikin's view, see his *Pol'sha i Dobrovol'cheskaia Armiia,* Paris, 1926.

113. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 269, 481–483.

114. Piłsudski's misgivings were confirmed in the summer of 1920, when Ioffe, through Tomas Naruševičius, the Lithuanian diplomat, informed the British about the negotiations between Markhlevskii and Boerner. This information, according to Ioffe, "aroused extraordinary interest among the British, who made [Naruševičius] understand that they would be very interested in a confirmation of it signed by me. I gave him a letter confirming the fact of these negotiations and Poland's understanding with us against Denikin. The British consider it a great argument against Poland—perhaps one could give them still more details of this understanding; let me know, I could do it through Naruševičius." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 10 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/9.)

115. *TRPR,* doc. 88, 231.

116. Markhlevskii to Lenin, 24 Dec. 1919, RGASPI 2/1/24393/3–5.

117. The Politburo's assessment of Piłsudski's terms: *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 14, 36; its intention of compromising Petliura: Politburo session of 11 Oct. 1919, RGASPI 17/3/29.

118. The so-called Berezina Canal lay in the strategic area from which both of the subsequent Soviet offensives began.

119. *TRPR,* doc. 91, 251–252; the latter quotation: Markhlevskii to Lenin, 24 Dec. 1919, RGASPI 2/1/24393/3–5. Soviet sincerity is at issue here, given that on 13 November 1919 the Polish Bureau at the Bolshevik Central Committee assigned its representatives to the Political Departments at the Western Front and at each of its three armies whose job it would be, among other things, to look after "all work of demoralizing the Polish Army." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 13, 34.)

120. The two most significant passages recorded by Boerner but missing in Markhlevskii's report are the following:

> The Chief of State once again declares that he does not want to fight the Soviets. However, if the Soviet government wants to fight with Poland, he will take up the challenge.

The Chief of State greatly regrets that there is no man in Soviet Russia who would want to understand him and take it upon himself to acknowledge this fact [that Piłsudski does not want to let political reaction triumph in Russia]. If Lenin is such a man, the Chief of State will send a representative to him who will define more precisely the point of view of the Chief of State; but if Lenin is not or does not want to be such a man, he will not do it.

It should also be noted that Boerner's and Markhlevskii's versions of Piłsudski's point on agitation are entirely different. This work is relying on Markhlevskii's report which actually conveyed Piłsudski's message to Lenin. For Boerner's notes, see *TRPR,* doc. 96, 263–264.

121. Markhlevskii to Lenin, 24 Dec. 1919, RGASPI 2/1/24393/3–5.

122. Some of these consequences were pointed out by Denikin who, in his letter to Piłsudski of 29 November 1919, complained that the recent passivity of Polish troops had

allowed the Bolsheviks to transfer against him 43,000 effectives from the Polish front. He foresaw that, in case of his defeat by the Bolsheviks, "Poland will stand face to face with such a force as, no longer checked by anyone, will threaten the very existence of Poland and its culture." At the same time, however, Denikin vowed that for "honest Russians the happiness of the Fatherland cannot be bought at the price of its dismemberment," thus indicating that Poland would not get any territorial concessions from him. (*SWW,* part 3, doc. 3, 42–43.)

Piłsudski's reference to his taking all consequences upon himself and facing opposition at home is not entirely clear but it can be interpreted in this way. This interpretation is confirmed by Markhlevskii's letter to Trotsky where he writes: "Piłsudski declares that 'his policy toward Russia consists in striving to prevent reaction from winning in Russia. To achieve this goal he will do everything he can, even if the Soviet government does not want to understand his intentions.' How to carry out this line is only his concern, as he must take into account both the internal situation and the Entente; it is a complex issue and by making demands as to the form of agreement we complicate this difficult task." (Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 9, 294.)

123. Markhlevskii to Lenin, 24 Dec. 1919, RGASPI 2/1/24393/3–5. As Kossakowski observed on 7 December: "Over a month after the agreement on the hostages was ultimately reached, its implementation is yet to begin." (Kossakowski, *Diariusz,* vol. 4, 249, APAN.)

124. *TRPR,* doc. 101, 279–280; doc. 108, 322 (Moscow's demand). Markhlevskii lamented: "The indolence of our authorities drives me to despair. They cannot conclude the armistice agreement, and I am sitting here without information." (RGASPI 143/1/106/4.) "On Saturday, 29 November, the Polish commander of the Polesie sector, [Col. Władysław] Sikorski, made a trip to the demarcation line to negotiate with our people but he could not get anything done because our units, despite the assurances given to me by the Front Staff in Smolensk, had no instructions whatsoever. . . . Besides, the man sent [from our side] to negotiate was completely ignorant." (RGASPI 143/1/103/14.) "The lists of hostages I have been given [back home] are a scandal." (Ibid./106/1.)

125. That actually may have been the case. For instance, in breach of the agreement signed in Mikaszewicze, allowing the returning Polish hostages, civilian prisoners, and refugees to take with them up to twenty thousand rubles, the Orgburo of the Bolshevik Party decided that, with the exception of the first echelon, they would have to prove that the money belonged to them. (*PSV,* doc. 16, 38.)

126. *TRPR,* doc. 109, 325; doc. 106, 304–305 (Kossakowski's belief).

127. Markhlevskii to Lenin, 24 Dec. 1919, RGASPI 2/1/24393/5. Paderewski was replaced as premier by Leopold Skulski. Markhlevskii believed that the new government would be willing to subordinate Polish foreign policy to the demands of the Entente and to actively support Denikin. (*DiM,* vol. 2, 502–505.)

128. As Kossakowski told Markhlevskii right at the beginning of the Mikaszewicze negotiations, Warsaw "will judge, based on the development and progress of our negotiations here, . . . what if any guarantees it may have with regard to any agreements" with Moscow. (*TRPR,* doc. 57, 160.)

129. As Stanislav Bobinskii, one of the leading Polish Communists in Soviet Russia, put it: "either Denikin will beat us . . . or we will beat Denikin (and then we will talk with [the Poles] in a different manner)." (Bobinskii to the Polish Bureau at the Central Committee

of the Bolshevik Party, 22 Oct. 1919, RGASPI 63/1/536, emphasis in the original.) The short quotation in the main text also comes from this source.

Chapter III. *Official Soviet Peace Offers*

1. According to Gen. Kutrzeba, "guiding ideas for the plan of our war against Russia in the spring of 1920 were created at the end of 1919 and the beginning of 1920." (Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* Warsaw: GiW, 1937, 42.)

2. Tomasz Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy 1914–1921,* Warsaw: Bellona, 1999, 317.

3. For its text, see *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 285, 521–522.

4. Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy,* 327.

5. *DKF,* vol. 2, doc. 157, 172–173.

6. For its text, see *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 294, 537–538.

7. *DKF,* vol. 2, doc. 158, 173–174.

8. It is noteworthy that the Latgalian campaign was conducted in very difficult winter conditions. More than half the casualties on either side were due to very low temperatures, reaching −35 Celsius, or −30 Fahrenheit. (Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy,* 338.) For example, only 107 Poles were killed in action but as many as 684 died of frostbite. (Tomasz Paluszyński, "Akcja polsko-łotewska w Łatgalii w styczniu 1920 roku," *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny,* 40:3–4, 1995, 35.)

9. *DVP,* vol. 2, doc. 227, 333–338.

10. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 250, 451, and doc. 279, 499. Chicherin's offer was to some extent contradicted by the Soviet 16th Army at the Polish front, which at the time instructed its negotiators "on no account to mention the word 'armistice' but conduct all talks using the term 'temporary cessation of hostilities.'" (AAN, KC 136/1/23.)

11. Indeed, in the wake of the Soviet peace offer, *Robotnik,* the press organ of the Polish Socialist Party, published an article by noted publicist Tadeusz Hołówko, entitled, "Will Poland Become a Flunkey of International Reaction?" and suggesting it would, if it rejected peace with Soviet Russia. (*Robotnik,* 2, 2 Jan. 1920.)

12. For instance, Chicherin recommended to Lenin making a peace offer to Finland as follows: "Obviously, . . . negotiations . . . will lead to nothing . . . [but making] a peace offer . . . at a given moment will very much embarrass our enemies and will cool down Finnish chauvinism." The Politburo agreed with this reasoning. (Politburo session of 11 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/77, Attachment: Chicherin to Lenin on Finland.)

13. Markhlevskii knew about this concentration no later than 8 December 1919. (*TRPR,* doc. 106, 309.) Concentration of Polish troops: Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy,* 319.

14. *DiM,* vol. 2, 502–505, especially doc. 281, 503; see also Andrzej Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje: Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku),* Cracow: Arcana, 2001, 430.

15. Maciej Rataj, *Pamiętniki,* Warsaw: LSW, 1965, 78; Rumbold to Curzon, 31 Dec. 1919, *DBFP,* vol. 3, 745.

16. Quoted in Jacek Ślusarczyk, *Polska a Państwo Radzieckie: Kalendarium 1918–1939,* Warsaw: AWM, 1996, 44.

17. Piotr S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations, 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, 160.

18. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 308, 568–569.

19. Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 529–533.

20. Lenin's statement in his speech at the Ninth Party Conference on 20 September 1920, that the Bolsheviks had been "willing to accept the Piłsudski line," cannot be taken at face value. After all, as will be seen, Lenin was the single person most deserving the blame for the "catastrophic" defeat in the Battle of Warsaw, since the strategic errors leading to the defeat were largely due to his overambitious political objectives. Therefore, he had a vested interest in convincing his comrades that the borders offered Poland in the wake of this "unheard-of defeat" were still much more advantageous to the Soviets than those contemplated by them in January 1920. (*TUL,* doc. 59, 96.) Markhlevskii, who had no such vested interest, argued that "the border which Poland could then have acquired agrees more or less with the one it was accorded at Riga." (*DiM,* vol. 2, 569 n. 4.) Yet, the Piłsudski line goes significantly (up to 180 kilometers) to the east of the Riga border. Moreover, if Poland "could have acquired" the Riga border in January 1920, then obviously the opening offer by the Soviets would have had to be the line still to the west of the Riga border.

One should also note that after the defeat in the Battle of Warsaw the Soviets realized the propaganda value of exaggerating the opportunities for concluding an advantageous peace treaty that the Poles allegedly had let slip away. For instance, Karl Radek, a member of both the Bolshevik Central Committee and Polish Revolutionary Committee, at that time made the following suggestion to Lenin: "In view of the incessant fighting between Piłsudski and the National Democrats, it would be very well to give [Stanisław] Grabski proof that Piłsudski conducted negotiations with us last year and he wasted an opportunity to conclude a very advantageous peace. I suggest that Markhlevskii's letters, *suitably rewritten*, be passed to Grabski through an agent." (Radek to Chicherin, Lenin, and Trotsky, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/22; RGASPI 5/1/2001/19, my emphasis.)

21. Quoted in Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 108.

22. RGASPI 325/2/26/52–53.

23. *TUL,* doc. 59, 97–98.

24. Sergei Poltorak, *Pobedonosnoe porazhenie: Razmyshleniia o sovetsko-pol'skoi voine 1920 goda v kanun ee 75-letiia,* St. Petersburg, 1994, 96 and 106.

25. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 23, 45–46; doc. 19 including note, 41–43 (interview).

26. See "Soviet Preparations for a Spring Offensive," later in this chapter.

27. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 19, 41.

28. As Lenin pointed out in his speech at the VTsIK session of 2 February 1920: "We know very well that our method works most effectively in the sense that it causes their [i.e., Poland's] disintegration. Ultimately, it puts us on the path desired by us." (*PSS,* vol. 40, 89–90.

29. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 23, 46. The *promezhutochnye* classes included all people who were not rich, and yet could not be called poor, either.

30. Andrzej Nowak, "Rok 1920: pierwszy plan ofensywy sowieckiej przeciw Polsce," *Niepodległość,* 49, 1997, 11–16; see also Richard Pipes, "New Materials on the Polish-Soviet War," in Robert Conquest and Dušan J. Djordjevich, eds., *Political and Ideological*

Confrontations in Twentieth-Century Europe: Essays in Honor of Milorad M. Drachkovitch, New York: Macmillan, 1996, 73, and N. Kakurin and V. Melikov, *Grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii: Voina s belopoliakami,* Moscow: AST, 2002, 100.

31. *TUL,* doc. 43, 78.

32. *TUL,* doc. 59, 110. While the phrase comes from Lenin's speech of 20 September 1920, it reflects his general view on the importance of the region in 1919–1920.

33. Kakurin and Melikov, *Voina s belopoliakami,* 100–106.

34. Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 589–590.

35. For instance, on 24 March 1920, the Bolshevik leadership apportioned 5 million rubles for propaganda among Polish troops at the Western Front alone. Just in April, over 1.5 million copies of agitational material in Polish were printed there. For comparison, a Red Army soldier's monthly pay was about 60 rubles. (Poltorak, *Pobedonosnoe porazhenie,* 104–105.)

36. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 32, 6 March, 57.

37. *TUL,* doc. 59, 111.

38. According to the Second Department, between 1 January and 23 April 1920, the number of Bolshevik infantry units on the Polish front grew steadily from four divisions and one brigade to twenty divisions and five brigades. (Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 45; see also 43.)

39. Quoted in Boris Sokolov, *Mikhail Tukhachevskii: Zhizn' i smert' krasnogo marshala,* Smolensk: Rusich, 1999, 124.

40. *TUL,* doc. 44, 17 March, 79.

41. Quoted in Sokolov, *Mikhail Tukhachevskii,* 125–126.

42. *TTP,* vol. 2, 114–115.

43. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 17, 39.

44. Polish Bureau report of 27 Feb. 1920, RGASPI 17/86/210/2–5.

45. Polish Bureau report of 21 April 1920, RGASPI 17/86/210/13–15.

46. Chicherin to Lenin, cc: Trotsky, 22 April 1920, RGASPI 2/1/24388/1; quoted also in Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* 134.

47. For instance, in early February 1920 the head of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, Stanisław Grabski, characterized the Soviet peace offer as "an invitation to our internal ferment and a gesture to influence other countries" which, however, "cannot be rejected *a limine*; instead, one should present conditions having an equal propaganda value [*równie brzmiące*] and ensuring our security." (Quoted in Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 540.)

48. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 160–162; see also Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 453.

49. As Premier Skulski put it, "in the matter of peace with the Bolsheviks it is necessary, given the divergences of opinions within the Entente, to adopt an independent stand without, however, offending the Entente." (Quoted in Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 163; see also Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 455.)

50. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 163.

51. Quoted in Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 163 and 165–166; see also 167.

52. Already on 29 August 1918, Moscow officially declared "all agreements" concluded by Russia with Prussia and Austria in connection with the partitions of Poland to be "null and void." (*ROK,* doc. 1, 11.)

53. Given also that the Borderlands population under Polish occupation had already been promised an opportunity to express their views as to the fate of the region by Piłsudski's Wilno Manifesto of 22 April 1919 and other declarations; see Chapter II, "Polish Federalism," and "Piłsudski's Quest for Borderlands Allies" in the present chapter.

54. According to the report of the Polish High Command of 19 February 1920, the following borderland countries of the former Russian Empire were ready for independence: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. (Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 538–539.)

55. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 318, 583–584.

56. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 164–165.

57. Since Skulski failed to define these lines, they are open to interpretation. Nowak appears to be correct when he identifies the strategic and the security lines with the maximum and minimum lines, respectively, as drawn by the Polish High Command in its report of 19 February 1920. The terms "maximum" and "minimum" are somewhat deceptive here, because the lines crossed; indeed, while the maximum line ran east of the minimum line in Belarus, the opposite was true in Ukraine. The minimum line was the existing front line. The maximum line was to be adopted if the Soviets accepted the Polish demand for an independent Ukrainian state. Then, in the Southwestland, Poland would only keep West Volhynia, while in the Northwestland its border would be drawn along the rivers Dnieper and Dvina. (Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 539 and 543.) Belarus, including the Minsk region and the Polish part of the provinces of Mogilev and Vitebsk, would form an autonomous part of Poland.

58. The number of Poles inhabiting the area was 6.5 times that of Latvians, according to Polish statistics, and 3.5 times, according to Latvian statistics. (Andrzej Skrzypek, *Związek Bałtycki: Litwa, Łotwa, Estonia i Finlandia w polityce Polski i ZSRR w latach 1919–1925,* Warsaw: KiW, 1972, 84.)

59. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 344, 638–640.

60. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 363, 698–716; quotation: 716. The Poles justified this condition as "the only real guarantee of observing the terms of the peace. We have to take into account that peace with Russia will remain merely on paper as long as the Russian Army stays intact." (*DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 376, 740.) At the end of 1919, the Red Army counted 4.5 million men. (Y. Korablev, *Lenin—the Founder of the Soviet Armed Forces,* Moscow: Progress, 1977, 121.)

61. Leon Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim Go znałem,* Warsaw: Rój, 1935, 221.

62. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 376, 740. According to Nowak, the options of both war and peace were considered seriously by Warsaw until early April 1920. (Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 559; see also 563–564.)

63. Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 576.

64. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 360, 693. An important aspect of choosing the obscure town of Borisov as a venue was the Polish desire to avoid any Allied influence over negotiations. Such influence, considered unavoidable in a place more accessible to Western diplomats and journalists, was expected to be detrimental to Polish interests, given the disapproval that Polish peace conditions evoked among the Allied Powers, especially Great Britain. (Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 575.)

65. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 331, 613. Chicherin described them as "more than unacceptable." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 29, 53.) Trotsky considered them "impudent." (*TTP,* vol. 2, 132–135.)

66. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 362, 695–697. As Lenin put it in his speech of 6 March 1920, "Poland's internal situation is so difficult that precisely in view of the class situation so obviously threatening to them [i.e., Polish landowners and capitalists], only by sensing their undoing can they decide to go on such an adventure [i.e., trying to induce the Polish people to go to war against Russia]." (*PSS,* vol. 40, 185.)

67. Report from Poland to the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, not before 20 March 1920, RGASPI 143/1/107/4–9 (all four quotations), emphasis in the original. The report of the Polish Bureau at the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party also asserted that "without a doubt, the Russian peace offer helped the development of revolutionary pressure by Polish workers against the government of Piłsudski [*sic*]." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 31, 56.)

68. As Nowak points out, there is no evidence whatsoever that the Soviets made any effort actually to prepare for possible peace negotiations in the period following their official peace offers. What has been unearthed so far is "only either exhortations to increase agitation or very tangible preparations for war." (Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 558–559.)

69. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 361, 694. The latter demand, however, was not categorical, as is clear from Chicherin's note to Lenin of 2 April 1920. Indeed, it would have been acceptable to the Bolsheviks to conduct peace negotiations with no armistice at all. It was Borisov itself that was utterly unacceptable. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 36, 61.)

70. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 364, 718–719, doc. 365, 720, and doc. 367, 722; see also doc. 378, 743–744, and doc. 380, 747–749.

71. The draft of this convention, based on the assumption that Latvia had concluded a peace with Soviet Russia, is quoted in extenso in Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy,* 349–350.

72. Tomasz Paluszyński, "Stosunki Polski z Łotwą (1919–1921)," in Andrzej Koryn, ed., *Odrodzona Polska wśród sąsiadów 1918–1921,* Warsaw: IH PAN, 1999, 190.

73. Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy,* 347.

74. Eriks Jekabsons, "Powstanie niepodległej Łotwy, jej położenie w regionie oraz stosunki z Polską w latach 1918–1920," in Andrzej Ajnenkiel, ed., *Rok 1918: Odrodzona Polska w nowej Europie,* Warsaw: Neriton, 1999, 174. In addition, the Latvians claimed that eastern Ilükste County was part of the economic region centered in Daugavpils.

75. Krystyna Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją: Białoruś w koncepcjach polskich ugrupowań politycznych 1918–1922,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1994, 110.

76. Lastouski was known not only for his radical nationalism but also for close ties with Lithuania, rather than Soviet Russia. The radical Left, however, had no choice but to accept his leadership, as they themselves lacked politicians of any considerable stature. (Oleg Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923,* Białystok: BTH, 130.)

77. On 1 February 1920, Piłsudski instructed Osmołowski, "I am for certain significant concessions in the realm of cultural development of Belarusians, but I do not want to make political concessions to the fiction of Belarus." (Quoted in Józef Lewandowski, *Federalizm: Litwa i Białoruś w polityce obozu belwederskiego [XI 1918–IV 1920],* Warsaw: PWN, 1962, 229.)

78. Quoted in Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski,* 216. Piłsudski's thinking is revealed by an entry of late December 1919 in the diary of Kazimierz Świtalski, his adjutant and top collaborator on policy toward the Borderlands: "In the present situation there is no real basis for a definitive solution of the question of the Borderlands in one or the other direction [i.e., toward federation or incorporation]. Rather decisive for the issue is the stand of Lithuania.

If one can talk with it about a Grand Duchy of Lithuania, then, considering its striving for a separate life, it will be possible to propose only a federalist concept. If one cannot reach agreement with Lithuania, then there will remain to be settled the issue between the Polish part of the Borderlands and Belarus. Here, one needs to take as the point of departure that, whatever one may say about the weakness of Belarusian state instincts, these territories are not Poland. Therefore, it is necessary, in accordance with the actual differences between the territories that are purely Polish and the territories inhabited by Belarusians, to accept certain concepts of autonomy for Belarus. The stand of the Wilno region, clamoring for incorporation into Poland, has this disadvantage, that the configuration of the border would then create a Catholic[-inhabited] strip of land, which properly should be extended almost up to Daugavpils. Such a border obviously cannot be defended." (Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz 1919–1935,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1992, 40.)

79. Quoted in Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją,* 86.

80. As Osmołowski warned the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, "carrying out a plebiscite would be a risky experiment, given the population's sympathetic mood [to the idea of incorporation] which can be gauged from the [numerous] petitions for incorporation into Poland." A special parliamentary committee, made up of the representatives of all parties, sent to the Northwestland to examine the state of administration and needs of the population, found that the local Poles overwhelmingly supported incorporation, while Belarusian nationalists favored alliance or federation with Poland. (Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją,* 86–87.) Piłsudski had planned the plebiscite for January, according to his statement made before a parliamentary subcommittee on 5 November 1919. (Wacław Jędrzejewicz, *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego 1867–1935,* London: PFK, 1977, vol. 1, 462.)

81. *DiM,* vol. 2, 640.

82. The Poles undertook to spend on this activity 11 million Polish marks. The Belarusians had requested 29 million. (Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją,* 111–115.) For comparison, the budget of the Civil Administration was about 19 million. In any event, according to Nicholas Vakar, Polish rule was a period of unprecedented gains for Belarus culturally and internationally, greater even than under the Germans, not to mention the Bolsheviks in early 1919. (Nicholas P. Vakar, *Belorussia: The Making of a Nation,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956, 112–113.)

83. Jan Jacek Bruski, *Petlurowcy: Centrum Państwowe Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej na wychodźstwie (1919–1924),* Cracow: Arcana, 2000, 118–120.

84. Piotr S. Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej," in Piotr S. Wandycz, *Polska a zagranica,* Paris: IL, 1986, 29 and 31; originally published in *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 12, 1967.

85. *DiM,* vol. 2, 638–640.

86. The Volhynian Front's political communiqué of 1 March 1920, *SWW,* part 8, doc. 1, 159.

87. Piłsudski to Wasilewski, March 1920, quoted in Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski,* 219–220.

88. Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 136–137.

89. During the negotiations, the Ukrainian side recognized that "the annexation to the Polish state of the western part of Volhynia is justified by necessities of a strategic nature." (*SWW,* part 8, doc. 4, 164–165.)

90. Polish large landowning in the Southwestland was a real problem for such an alliance, given that Petliura's government strove to achieve both national and social revolutionary goals. Many Polish landowners had been expropriated there in a rather violent manner.

91. For an English translation from the Ukrainian, see John S. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism,* New York: Arno Press, 1972, 301–302. For the Polish text, see, for example, *UPD,* vol. 2, 33–35.

92. For both the Polish and the Ukrainian texts, see *UPD,* vol. 2, 36–45.

93. Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej," 34; see also *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 26, 72–73.

94. To use Piotr Wandycz's classic assessment; see his "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej," 35.

95. *Dziennik Poznański,* quoted in Marek Figura, *Konflikt polsko-ukraiński w prasie Polski Zachodniej w latach 1918–1923,* Poznań: WP, 2001, 167. Typical National Democratic reactions to the alliance were clearly negative. For example, the *Kurier Poznański* wondered "how Poland, organizing its own state with difficulty, could manage to establish and sustain a Ukrainian state, where thus far there has been no evidence of any native state-building forces." This venture was a no-win proposition in any case, since, should an independent Ukrainian state succeed against overwhelming odds, "it will sooner or later swoop down on our southeastern borderlands." (Quoted in Figura, *Konflikt polsko-ukraiński w prasie*, 159.)

96. Lt.-Col. Przewłocki's report of 20 April 1920, CAW I.300.1/20/99–100; "Memoriał w sprawie administracji na Wołyniu," quoted in Joanna Gierowska-Kałłaur, *Straż Kresowa a Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich: Współdziałanie czy rywalizacja?* Warsaw: IH PAN, 1999, doc. 14, 109–114.

97. *DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 322, 590.

98. Gierowska-Kałłaur, *Straż Kresowa a Zarząd Cywilny,* doc. 13, 106.

99. *Kurier Poznański,* 22 April 1920, quoted in Figura, *Konflikt polsko-ukraiński w prasie,* 159.

100. V. Ia. Sipols, "Podpisanie soglasheniia o peremirii i mirnogo dogovora mezhdu Sovetskoi Rossiei i Latviei," in I. I. Mints, ed., *Inostrannaia voennaia interventsiia v Pribaltike 1917–1920 gg.,* Moscow: Nauka, 1988, 256.

101. *DVP,* vol. 2, doc. 217, 320, and doc. 227, 333.

102. As Premier Ernestas Galvanauskas informed his government on 12 February 1920; quoted in P. Iu. Zhiugzhda, "Zakliuchenie sovetsko-litovskogo mirnogo dogovora," in Mints, *Inostrannaia voennaia interventsiia v Pribaltike,* 264.

103. Alfred Erich Senn, *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, 210.

104. Statement by Chicherin, *Pravda,* 73, 3 April 1920.

105. Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją,* 110.

106. Politburo session of 21 Nov. 1919, RGASPI 17/3/42.

107. The former quotation: *PSS*, vol. 30, 246–247; the two latter quotations: *TUL,* doc. 42, 76.

108. Their dissatisfaction was voiced at the conference of Ukrainian Bolsheviks at Gomel' in November 1919. (John S. Reshetar, "The Communist Party of the Ukraine and Its Role in the Ukrainian Revolution," in Taras Hunczak, ed., *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977, 182.)

It was the Volhynian Bolsheviks who were especially dissatisfied with Moscow's policies in Ukraine, presumably because they could compare them with Polish policies in Volhynia, which were much less oppressive.

109. As a member of the Revolutionary-Military Committee of the 12th Army, N. I. Muralov, reported to Lenin, "with the advance of our troops after the victory over Denikin, our Army and Divisional Political Sections established local Soviet power, detaching from their reserves *volost'* [the lowest administrative level], county, and sometimes provincial Revolutionary-Military Committees." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 106.)

110. *PSS,* vol. 30, 142–144.

111. *TUL,* doc. 42, 76; Politburo session of 21 Nov. 1919, RGASPI 17/3/42. The Borotbists were the Left faction of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, so called after the title of their press organ, *Borot'ba.*

112. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 22, 45, including also the preceding quotation.

113. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 21, 44; doc. 24, 47; docs. 28 and 29, 53; doc. 30, 55, see also doc. 27, 52; doc. 24 note, 48.

114. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 6, 12.

115. Politburo session of 21 Nov. 1919, RGASPI 17/3/42.

116. Quoted in Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 43.

117. Quoted in Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 70, and 69 (the long quotation).

118. *SWW,* part 8, doc. 1, 145–146; see also doc. 2, 146–148, and Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 43–44.

119. Second Department report of 1 Jan. 1920, quoted in Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 71; see also 73.

120. Nowak, *Polska a trzy Rosje,* 560–561; Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 47.

121. Pipes, "New Materials on the Polish-Soviet War," 73. Still, in June 1920, the Bolshevik Western Front alone had 220 airplanes, while the entire Polish Army had only 117. (Poltorak, *Pobedonosnoe porazhenie,* 136.)

122. Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 57.

123. Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 57 and 59.

124. However, according to the official report to Lenin of 17 May 1920, "the Galician adventure was only a small episode, one of the insignificant causes of the defeat of our army, the more so since the 1st Galician Brigade, the most numerous and disciplined (2,000 bayonets), fought very well [against the Poles] the entire time until the withdrawal of our units." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 95–96; see also 98.) In view of this report, it appears that Palij exaggerated both the significance of the East Galician brigades' surrender and the number of their troops, whether he gave it as "more than 23,000 soldiers" or "a total of 18,219 men." (Michael Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919–1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution,* Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1995, 113 and 111, respectively.) According to Polish sources, the two brigades that surrendered voluntarily counted 11,000 men, while the remaining brigade had 3,000 men. (Jacek Legieć, *Armia Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej w wojnie polsko-ukraińsko-bolszewickiej 1920 roku,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2002, 75.)

According to the same report to Lenin, "during the withdrawal of our units, the population of Berdichev, Lipovets, and other counties, entire villages armed with rifles, forks, and axes, were coming out on roads, attacking our camps, and taking Red Army soldiers

prisoner; Communists, Jews, and commissars were shot; [ethnic] Russians were beaten, stripped of their clothes, and sent to 'Kursk' [where the Front Command was located]; while Ukrainians were stripped and let go home . . . In this way, most camps and field guns of the 44th Division were destroyed." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 96; see also 98–99.) Piłsudski reported: "We have an uprising against the Bolsheviks. Almost everywhere the population disarms scattered Bolsheviks, and points out those in hiding. . . . This is important because [our] quick advance left large numbers of Bolsheviks scattered in the forests and they could be dangerous to us, if the population's attitude were different." (Piłsudski to Sosnkowski, 29 April 1920, *Niepodległość,* 7, 1962, 99.)

125. Piłsudski wrote to Premier Skulski on 1 May 1920: "Yesterday, we intercepted a message from [12th] Army command in Kiev, radioing all its division commands to receive operational orders. Only one division responded, and that with information it did not know where its troops were, so it was not in a position to carry out any orders; no other division responded at all." (*ROK,* doc. 82, 154.)

126. Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 101.

127. Adam Zamoyski, *The Battle for the Marchlands,* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981, 45.

128. Kakurin and Melikov, *Voina s belopoliakami,* 154.

129. Politburo session of 4 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/74.

130. Julian Stachiewicz, *Działania zaczepne 3. armii na Ukrainie,* Warsaw, 1925, 109. Some authors have criticized Piłsudski, who personally led one of the attacking armies, for failing to employ a unified front command and a flanking maneuver at the front level. (Mieczysław Pruszyński, *Wojna 1920: Dramat Piłsudskiego,* Warsaw: Graf-Punkt, 1999, 110; Anon., *Kampania roku 1920 w świetle prawdy,* Lwów, 1925, 6ff.)

131. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 20, 53.

132. Several influential members of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee had already strongly protested against the Polish offensive in the Southwestland and Piłsudski's proclamation to the region's population. (*UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 17, 48–50.)

Chapter IV. *The Minsk Negotiations*

1. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 7, 13.

2. Quoted in N. Kakurin and V. Melikov, *Grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii: Voina s belopoliakami,* Moscow: AST, 2002, 145.

3. Trotsky's theses, "The Polish Front and Our Tasks," of 30 April 1920, RGASPI 2/1/13774/2–5. The theses were accepted by Lenin on 30 April and published on 23 May 1920 as the "Theses of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party." (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 34, 65–68.) It is clear that by "socialist republic" Trotsky meant "Soviet republic," since in the same sentence he also described Soviet Russia as "socialist Russia."

4. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 27, 53. The same idea was expressed slightly more eloquently by the resolution of the Conference of Polish Communists in Russia of 3–5 May 1920: "The inescapable and imminent outbreak of proletarian revolution in Poland and Western Europe will be speeded up by victories of the proletarian Soviet Republic over the deceived troops of the adventurer Piłsudski." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 45, 85.)

5. For more evidence, see Chapter III, "Soviet Preparations for a Spring Offensive."

6. Mikhail Tukhachevski, "The March Beyond the Vistula," in Józef Piłsudski, *Year 1920 and Its Climax: Battle of Warsaw during the Polish-Soviet War, 1919–1920,* London: Piłsudski Institute of America, 1972, 225.

7. Stanisław Szeptycki, *Front Litewsko-Białoruski, 10 marca 1919–30 lipca 1920,* Cracow, 1925, 20.

8. Their hand may have been forced, however, by the indiscretion of Premier Skulski, who revealed the basic terms of the Polish-Belarusian agreement of March 1920. (For those terms, see Chapter II, "Piłsudski's Quest for Borderlands Allies.") The subsequent demands were thus probably meant to reduce the damage and to strengthen the position of the Supreme Rada as the leadership of the Belarusian national movement. (*ROK,* doc. 78, 147.)

9. Oleg Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923,* Białystok: BTH, 1995, 139.

10. Mirosław Arciszewski's report to the Polish Foreign Ministry after his special mission to Belarus in June 1920. (Krystyna Gomółka, *Między Polską a Rosją: Białoruś w koncepcjach polskich ugrupowań politycznych 1918–1922,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1994, 124.)

11. The entry of 22 June 1920 in Świtalski's diary gives us a glimpse at Piłsudski's thinking at this time: "It is a constant tendency to make Belarusian activists focus on their work in the Minsk region, being an antidote for the Muscovites. At the same time, they should not be let into the regions of Grodno and Wilno. The Belarusian question is difficult to solve because they do not have [enough qualified] people and, if one were inclined to agree to their demands of creating Belarusian centers, they would lack candidates for the posts of office-holders in the counties, etc." (Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz 1919–1935,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1992, 56.)

12. Quoted in Michael Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919–1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution,* Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1995, 101. At the same time, Piłsudski saw the usefulness of delaying the withdrawal of troops until the economic agreement had been signed according to Polish desiderata. (*ROK,* doc. 85, 165.)

13. Speech in Vinnitsa, 17 May 1920; see Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe,* Warsaw: IJP, 1937, vol. 5, 159.

14. Quoted in Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska 1920 roku,* Warsaw: GiW, 1937, 254. Palij erroneously describes this as the High Command's proclamation to the Ukrainian population. (Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance,* 104.)

15. For a comprehensive and balanced treatment, see Jan Jacek Bruski, *Petlurowcy: Centrum Państwowe Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej na wychodźstwie (1919–1924),* Cracow: Arcana, 2000, 166–173. The chapter by Palij dealing with this question contains numerous errors of fact and interpretation. (Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance,* 99–123.) For a convincing Ukrainian perspective on the issue, see Antoni Serednicki, "Polsko-ukraińskie kłopoty sojusznicze," in Andrzej Koryn, ed., *Wojna polsko-sowiecka 1920 roku: Przebieg walk i tło międzynarodowe,* Warsaw: IH PAN, 1993, 209–213.

16. This inability is confirmed by the Polish High Command's commentary on the Polish-Ukrainian military convention of 12 May 1920. (*UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 24, 65.)

17. Polish troops themselves appear not to have been very well equipped. For instance, a report of March 1920 revealed that in all units stationed in Lwów, equipment was "poor."

(CAW 1772/89/241/1/112.) In mid-August 1920, in an infantry division "assigned a decisive role in the war . . . more than half the men" had no boots. "The poor equipment of the soldiers" must have been an endemic problem, since, according to Piłsudski, it was an excuse often heard from "many of my subordinates" for their failures on the battlefield. (Piłsudski, *Year 1920,* 173.) Even Palij agrees that "Polish troops were poorly equipped." (Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance,* 114.) In any case, Legieć asserts that Ukrainian troops received more than enough war material, even though it was less than had been promised. (Jacek Legieć, *Armia Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej w wojnie polsko-ukraińsko-bolszewickiej 1920 roku,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2002, 98.)

18. Polish civil administration, established in this area in early 1920, was to be replaced by Ukrainian civil administration which would then carry out conscription. The replacement formally began on 29 June 1920, when most of Petliura's Ukraine had already been lost to the Bolsheviks.

In the end, the three newly taken Podolia counties of Mogilev na Dnestre, Iampol', and Ushitsa were the only part of Petliura's Ukraine where the Ukrainians carried out conscription. It took place in mid-May 1920. (Legieć, *Armia URL,* 95–98.)

19. According to a report by the command of the Polish 6th Army, to which Petliura's troops were operationally subordinated, dated 21 May 1920, "there are hardly any regular soldiers among Dnieper Ukrainians. Usually they serve for plunder. The aim of every battle is to take some Jewish town to make a pogrom and to plunder. There were pogroms as recently as the 10th and 15th. Most soldiers ride on wagons filled with plunder. There is no discipline whatsoever. They obey an order given by their officers only when they like it and when it gives prospect of plunder. Vengeful toward the Bolsheviks but, on the other hand, equally hostile toward the Poles. There is widespread talk that Petliura has sold out Ukraine to Poland." Dnieper Ukrainian junior officers "have no national feelings whatsoever." Many of them "fight, first and foremost, for plunder. They are barely different from illiterate peasants." Those officers and soldiers who hailed from East Galicia were nationally conscious but "distrustful of Petliura and hostile to Poland." The report concluded: "To establish a regular Ukrainian army, most of these people will have to be demobilized, as they are demoralized and unsuitable for a regular army." (*UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 29, 94–95.)

Surprisingly, historians are apparently not aware of these Polish reasons for lack of support for conscription in Ukraine, and even the conscientious Bruski maintains that there is "no document which would shed light on the matter from the Polish side." (Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 167.)

20. As Gen. Romer put it in January 1920. (Jan Romer, *Pamiętniki,* Lwów, 1938, 201.) Note that Petliura's envoy to Switzerland viewed the frictions as caused by "overkeen junior officers and NCOs." (*SWW,* part 8, doc. 8, 172.) Piłsudski, on the other hand, put much of the blame on the two highest Polish military commanders in Ukraine, Generals Iwaszkiewicz and Listowski, who, as he put it, "are completely unsuitable for leading troops in such political conditions as we have here! They constantly spoil any policy by their stupidity or simply ill will and witting and unwitting obstruction." (Piłsudski's letter of 12 May 1920, "Listy Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego do Generała Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego w okresie wyprawy kijowskiej," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 2:1[5], 1992/93, 128B.) It may have been a factor that many Polish officers and soldiers had fought against Ukrainians in East Galicia and Volhynia, and the war in the former was bitter indeed.

21. Palij's claim to the contrary in *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance,* 112–113, is ill founded, as he disregards any of the numerous relevant Polish documents found in *UPD,* vol. 2. In particular, the disarming by the Poles of the East Galician units that had rebelled against the Bolsheviks and gone over to the Polish side can hardly support Palij's case. He fails to consider that before betraying the Bolsheviks, the East Galicians had already betrayed Petliura and later Denikin. Thus, they could hardly be considered trustworthy. Moreover, their hostility to the Poles, their old enemies, and to Petliura, whom they considered a traitor, was well known. Nonetheless, the East Galicians were allowed to join Petliura's troops on an individual basis. In late August 1920, a large detachment made up of mostly East Galicians betrayed both Petliura and the Poles by breaking out to Czechoslovakia. This clearly confirmed that the Polish fears had not been unfounded.

22. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 21, 58, and doc. 24, 64 and 66.

23. For example, Gen. Kutrzeba estimated afterwards that the process of building up the Ukrainian army needed at least six weeks and would have been completed after twelve weeks. (Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 254.) Yet, the time actually available did not exceed four to five weeks.

24. M. K. Dziewanowski, *Joseph Piłsudski: A European Federalist 1918–1922,* Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1969, 278. As one Ukrainian politician stressed, "the future [of the alliance] depends on the strategic situation [at the front]." (*SWW,* part 8, doc. 6, 170.)

25. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 225–226. On 10 May 1920, Trotsky acknowledged that Bolshevik troops fought against "a regular army under the leadership of good technicians." By contrast, he saw the particular weak spot of the Red Army in its junior officer corps. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 52, 91–92; see also doc. 53, 101.)

26. Mieczysław Pruszyński, *Wojna 1920: Dramat Piłsudskiego,* Warsaw: Graf-Punkt, 1999, 117–123; I. Babel, *1920 Diary,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, 39–40 and 73–74.

27. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 67, 129–130. After the war, Piłsudski himself admitted to having underestimated the Cavalry Army. (Piłsudski, *Year 1920,* 75–76.) In the fall of 1919, he maintained: "I beat the Bolsheviks wherever I want and whenever I want." (Quoted in Pruszyński, *Wojna 1920,* 285.)

28. Adam Zamoyski, *The Battle for the Marchlands,* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981, 78–80; Tadeusz Machalski, *Ostatnia epopeja: Działania kawalerii w 1920 roku,* London, 1969, 106–109.

29. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 9, 22–23.

30. Melanie Czajkowskyj, "Volodymyr Vynnychenko and His Mission to Moscow and Kharkiv," *Journal of Graduate Ukrainian Studies,* 5, 1978, 8–22; *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 79, 260–261 (including the quotation).

31. Politburo session of 21 Nov. 1919, RGASPI 17/3/42, and *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 6, 13, respectively.

32. Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine 1917–1957,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, 100.

33. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 18, 51.

34. As is evident, for instance, from Ioffe's wires to Chicherin of 6 and 7 July 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5. Asked by Chicherin to demand from Lithuania and Latvia recognition of Soviet Ukraine as an independent state, Ioffe replied that this would be "inadmissible either

from the legal or political point of view. [Soviet Ukraine] is included in [Soviet Russia] constituting a part of it; consequently, in conducting negotiations on behalf of [Soviet Russia], I am formally conducting them also on behalf of [Soviet Ukraine] . . . Before the world—we are a single federative republic and we cannot appear otherwise." Told by Chicherin to proceed in spite of his objections, Ioffe observed: "consequently, from the legal point of view, the predicate 'federative' in the title 'Russian Federative Socialist Republic' should be removed, since given the full independence and sovereignty of the parts there can be no federation." (Emphasis in the original.)

35. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 64, 127 including n. 1.

36. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 136, 263–265.

37. As is clear from Ioffe's negotiations with the Lithuanians in May and June where he consistently urged them to sign a military convention against Poland. Moreover, Chicherin mentioned Warsaw for the first time as a possible military objective on 10 June, the day of the ultimate failure of the limited offensive in Belarus. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 60, 119.)

38. The Polish Bureau to the Bolshevik Central Committee, 21 April 1920, RGASPI 17/86/210/13–15.

39. 12th Army Commissar Muralov reported to Lenin in late May: "From debriefing of Polish prisoners of war, to find out about the mood and level of revolutionary consciousness, there arises an entirely clear picture of nationalist enthusiasm among Polish peasants and workers." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 99.)

40. A week before the Polish capture of Kiev, Trotsky wrote in his plan of action for the Bolshevik Party: "The Polish bourgeoisie began the offensive in Ukraine, openly declaring its intention to occupy it in order to subsequently establish its military, national, economic, and political dominion over it—by means of figureheads like Petliura. . . . The workers and peasants, male and female, must feel and understand that the war against Poland is their war, is a war for the independence of Socialist Russia." (Trotsky, "The Polish Front and Our Tasks," 30 April 1920, RGASPI 2/1/13774/2–5.)

41. A. P. Isaev, *Voina s Pol'shei: Rossiia za liniei fronta,* St. Petersburg: Nestor, 1999, 122–123ff.; A. P. Isaev, *Sibirskaia glubinka i sovetsko-pol'skaia voina 1920 g.,* St. Petersburg: Nestor, 1999, 5ff.; Sergei Poltorak, *Pobedonosnoe porazhenie: Razmyshleniia o sovetsko-pol'skoi voine 1920 goda v kanun ee 75-letiia,* St. Petersburg, 1994, 112.

42. Thus causing dismay among less flexible Bolsheviks like Evgenii A. Preobrazhenskii. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 47, 88.)

43. *Pravda,* 97, 7 May 1920. The letter, dated 1 May, i.e., before the Polish capture of Kiev, was initially designated by Lenin as "secret" and kept in his personal archive. (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 44, 76.)

44. For instance, in June alone, 136 former tsarist officers and NCOs volunteered in Briansk Province of Russia proper. (Poltorak, *Pobedonosnoe porazhenie,* 116.)

45. Trotsky, "The Polish Front and Our Tasks," 30 April 1920, RGASPI 2/1/13774/2–5.

46. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 48, including notes, 89; see also doc. 54, 110.

47. They were to be given commands one level lower than those they had previously held. (*PSV,* vol. 1, 91–92 n. 1.)

48. Politburo session of 25 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/82. Note that the editor of *PSV* removed the measures directed against Soviet Poles from the minutes of the session, ostensibly because they "do not relate" to the Polish-Soviet war; see vol. 1, doc. 55, 110–113.

49. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 243, 495–496.

50. Chicherin to Trotsky, 10 June 1920, *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 60, 119.

51. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 228, 454.

52. P. V. Suslov, *Politicheskoe obespechenie sovetsko-pol'skoi kampanii 1920 goda,* Moscow, 1930, 72.

53. Grzegorz Łukomski, *Walka Rzeczypospolitej o kresy północno-wschodnie 1918–1920: Polityka i działania militarne,* Poznań: UAM, 1994, 101.

54. That is, Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski on 2 July 1920; see *SRP,* doc. 23, 65–66.

55. A Polish delegation, led by the outgoing foreign minister, Patek, had already been there.

56. *ROK,* doc. 103, 187–193; PROP, 151–176.

57. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 81, 148 and 152; and doc. 84, 157 (respectively). The documents are in English.

58. *ROK,* doc. 105, 194. Initially, Lloyd George agreed only to twenty kilometers, but at the insistence of W. Grabski the distance was increased to fifty kilometers; see *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 84, 160–161.

59. *ROK,* doc. 108, 198–199; *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 84, 160.

60. The line of 8 December 1919 (see Map 2) dealt exclusively with the territories of the Russian Empire and thus extended from the border of East Prussia to the border of Galicia. (*DiM,* vol. 2, doc. 269, 481–483.) Sworakowski has argued that Curzon extended the line by mistake. (Witold Sworakowski, "An Error Regarding Eastern Galicia in Curzon's Note to the Soviet Government of July 11, 1920," *Journal of Central European Affairs,* 4:1, 1944, 1–24.)

61. *DVP,* vol. 3, 54–55. For the original text of the note as received by Moscow, see RGASPI 2/1/14655.

62. The Curzon line left the Białystok region, belonging to the Borderlands, on the Polish side but it was an obvious solution, since the region lay to the west of the line of 8 December 1919, and from that day on it had been officially treated as an integral part of the Polish state.

63. *ROK,* doc. 108, 199–200; PROP, 177–195.

64. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 62, 122.

65. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 66, 128–129.

66. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 70, 134–135 (Kamenev's advice); doc. 68, 130–132 (Chicherin's view; emphasis in the original); doc. 69, 132–133 (Trotsky's view).

67. Rozovskii, Rotshtein, and Klyshko to Chicherin, 12 July 1920, to be passed to Lenin, Trotsky, and Krasin, RGASPI 2/1/14672; underlined by Lenin.

68. As Lenin put it in his speech of 20 September 1920: "We replied to Curzon, 'You refer to the League of Nations. But what is the League of Nations? It is not worth a damn.' Another question: Who will decide the fate of Poland? The question can be decided not by what the League of Nations says but by what the Red Army soldier says. This is what we replied to Curzon, if we translate our note into plain language. . . . We said, plainly: 'To hell with the League of Nations, we are going forward.'" (*TUL,* doc. 59, 102 and 107.)

69. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 71, 136–140.

70. Not to mention that Chicherin consistently referred in error to "the 3 December line," while the Curzon line was described by most Bolsheviks, including Markhlevskii,

Chicherin, Lenin, and Trotsky, as "the Foch line," although the "Commission for Working Out in Detail Negotiations with Poland" called it "the Clemenceau line." (*PSV,* vol. 1, docs. 71 and 72, 136–141; AVPRF 4/32/37/1; docs. quoted in Thomas C. Fiddick, *Russia's Retreat from Poland, 1920: From Revolution to Peaceful Coexistence,* Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990, 97 and 104.)

71. Sharing this distinction with Grigorii Ia. Sokol'nikov, who could also boast a Ph.D. (*Politicheskie partii Rossii, konets XIX–pervaia tret' XX veka: Entsiklopediia,* Moscow: Rosspen, 1996, Appendix 7, 772–779.)

72. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 72, 140, emphasis by Lenin. By "the Białystok region" Markhlevskii likely understood the counties of Białystok, Sokółka, and Bielsk.

73. Quoted in I. V. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920 gg,* Moscow: RAN IBiS, 1994, 173.

74. *PSV,* vol. 1, 143 n. 1, and doc. 74, 142–143 (typed version). So much for Fiddick's theory that the Soviet decision to invade Poland was taken by the Soviet military "independently of and in opposition" to "Moscow's politicians" who "were attempting to establish peace . . . along their western frontier." During the Soviet offensive, Lenin in particular was supposed to maintain "pessimism about immediate revolutionary possibilities [as well as] willingness to accept the Versailles Treaty and to engage in compromise and [even] a strategic retreat." (Fiddick, *Russia's Retreat from Poland,* 28, 108, and 125.) Fiddick's theory dismisses solid contrary evidence and relies instead on circumstantial evidence. New evidence available today overwhelmingly disproves his theory. See further in this chapter for more evidence.

75. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 93, 170–176.

76. Politburo session of 10 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/76, attachment.

77. Quoted in Piotr Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 113. This notion is confirmed by Chicherin's report to Lenin of 22 May 1920 that "Comrade Ioffe offers territorial concessions in exchange for Lithuania's military action against Poland." In addition to military considerations, Chicherin greatly valued the "political effect of our apparent rapprochement. It breaks the chain of the borderland cordon, part of the borderland states become our friends, Poland's position as a representative of the borderlands is taken away from it, the opposition of all the borderland states is eliminated." Ioffe, on the other hand, emphasized that "peace with Lithuania . . . will have a demoralizing influence on Polish internal relations." (AVPRF 4/25/5.)

78. Quoted in Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 114. Zalys emphasizes Lithuanian inhibitions about signing such a convention due to the expected displeasure of the Western Powers, especially France; however, these inhibitions appear to have been secondary. (Vytautas Zalys, "The Return of Lithuania to the European Stage," in Edvardas Tuskenis, ed., *Lithuania in European Politics: The Years of the First Republic 1918–1940,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, 68–69.) Ioffe reported to the Politburo on 21 May 1920: "I am conducting negotiations with Lithuania on our combined military action against Poland. They agree in principle . . ." (AVPRF 4/25/5.)

79. Ioffe reported to Trotsky on 25 June 1920: "Yesterday, according to the directives of our military command, I worked out the attached military convention with Lithuania." (RGASPI 325/26/76.) In his report to the Politburo, Ioffe put it quite bluntly: "A military convention with Lithuania has been worked out, and its acceptance or rejection [by the

Lithuanian government] will, properly speaking, decide the issue of [our peace] negotiations." (AVPRF 4/25/5.)

80. *TUL,* doc. 51, 87.

81. It should be noted that the treaty did not deal with Suwałki Province, apparently due to the fact that it had been a part of Congress Poland. The Soviet-Lithuanian border was drawn only in the Northwestland, leaving the border of Lithuania in former Congress Poland to be defined by a future agreement between Lithuania and Poland. For the text of the treaty, see *DVP,* vol. 3, doc. 12, 28–41.

82. As Ioffe aptly put it in his report to the Politburo of 21 May 1920: "Obviously, the Lithuanians will do nothing for free; therefore, we are giving them a somewhat larger territory than is their due." In particular, Wilno was, "strictly speaking, not their due, either." (AVPRF 4/25/5.) On another occasion, Ioffe said: "Now, we are conducting war against Poland. By ceding Belarusian territory with the city of Wilno to the greedy Lithuanian priests, not only are we getting our right flank protected but also in certain cases we are receiving assistance from Lithuania. If we defeat Poland, the days of clerical-bourgeois Lithuania will also be numbered. However, if we are forced to retreat deeply into Belarus, we will leave to priest-dominated Lithuania such a number of Belarusian people as it will never be able to digest. As a result of disagreements between Lithuanians and Belarusians, which we consider unavoidable, we will have a revolution, which will in turn wipe clerical-bourgeois Lithuania from the face of the earth." (Quoted in Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe,* 117.)

83. According to Chicherin, the supreme commander "has ordered to proceed with such action [i.e., local military agreements] on condition that the Lithuanian armies be subordinate to ours." (*TUL,* doc. 51, 87.)

84. Quoted in Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 116.

85. Zalys is egregiously mistaken in saying that Soviet Russia "recognized Lithuanian sovereignty over . . . Suwałki, [and] Augustów." (Zalys, "Return of Lithuania to the European Stage," 69.) The Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty did not deal with Congress Poland; see note 81.

86. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 237; *SWW,* part 10, doc. 2, 219–222; Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 121–128. Russia had wide-gauge railroads. Augustinas Voldemaras, the Lithuanian politician, recounts: "When the Red Army attacked Warsaw, it needed rail cars for transporting troops that Lithuania was able to supply. Delegated by the Lithuanian government, I went to Wilno, where the staff of a Soviet army was installed, to pursue this matter. . . . The agreement on turning over the means of transportation needed to be so worded that neither Poland nor any [other] state . . . could accuse Lithuania of violating neutrality. I formulated the text in Russian and Lithuanian." (Quoted ibid., 127.)

87. Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 116–121. Piłsudski realized that once Wilno was surrendered to the Lithuanians, its recovery would be extremely difficult. At the same time, however, he said that if he could speak for the city, he would choose the Lithuanians over the Bolsheviks. (PROP, 182–191.)

88. Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 129–130; Piotr Łossowski, "Wydarzenia militarne i polityczne wojny 1920 r. na ziemiach północno-wschodnich," in Koryn, *Wojna polsko-sowiecka,* 46.

89. For example, the Revolutionary-Military Committee of Lida County reported on 19 August 1920: "The work on the strengthening of Soviet power continues." Over

the preceding week, 232 people, apparently all of them "White Poles," had been arrested. Critical was the issue of "determining the provincial capital." In contravention of the Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty, the committee proposed that Lida County be "temporarily" subordinated to Minsk, the capital of newly reestablished Soviet Belarus. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 150, 27–28.) A report of the Second Department emphasized "the complete ignoring by victorious Red troops of the peace treaty concluded with Lithuania, the introduction of Soviet administration in Wilno and generally in all the territory that had been occupied by the Poles and granted now by the Moscow government to Lithuania, the establishment of the Cheka network, and a Communist reign of terror, Russification of the civil administration, and insulting treatment given to Lithuanian [administrative] decrees. Faced with the breakup of [direct] negotiations with the local Soviet rulers and the failure of their protests in Moscow, the Lithuanians have already withdrawn their troops and offices beyond the demarcation line, intending to defend it in case of attempts at violating it." (Report "The Baltic States and Russia," TsKhIDK 308/12/138/316–318.)

90. Ioffe to Chicherin and the Politburo, 7 July 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5. A few days later, Lenin wrote on the margin of Chicherin's letter, "Occupy [Wilno] and organize a revolution in Lithuania." (*TUL,* doc. 51 n. 5, 88; emphasis in the original.) On 16 July 1920, the Central Committee decided "to help liberate the proletariat and the toiling masses of Poland and Lithuania from their bourgeoisie and landlords." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 74, 142–143, typed version.) Moreover, in his speech of 20 September 1920, Lenin confirmed that the Soviets had intended to "Sovietize Lithuania and Poland" first. (Ibid., doc. 59, 98.)

91. Politburo session of 10 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/76.

92. Ioffe to the Politburo, 21 May 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5.

93. As the Latvian foreign minister, Zigfrids Meierovics, told a Polish diplomat at Riga: "If Poland falls, Latvia's independence can be counted in weeks." (Quoted in Kossakowski, *Diariusz,* vol. 5, 68, APAN.)

94. Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5.

95. Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5. In his wire of 7 August 1920, Chicherin instructed Ioffe bluntly: "If our reply does not satisfy Britain, tomorrow the Entente will begin war and blockade. . . . Sign the treaty immediately." (AVPRF 4/32/40/5.)

96. RGASPI 2/1/14688.

97. I. Ignatenko, *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i samoopredelenie Belorussii,* Minsk, 1992, 202–203.

98. Ioffe to Chicherin, and Lorents to Chicherin, both 7 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/6 and 8, respectively.

99. *IBD,* 392–394.

100. Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 131.

101. Lucjan Żeligowski, *Wojna w roku 1920: Wspomnienia i rozważania,* Warsaw: MON, 1990, 43; Szeptycki, *Front litewsko-białoruski,* 30.

102. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 239–240.

103. As he recalled in 1921; quoted in Pruszyński, *Wojna 1920,* 171.

104. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 249–250; teleprinter conversation between Tukhachevskii and S. Kamenev of 10 Aug. 1920, RGVA 33987/1/498/796–798. Cutting off Warsaw from Danzig, through which Poland might be supplied with war materiel, was a secondary consideration.

105. Richard Pipes, "New Materials on the Polish-Soviet War," in Robert Conquest and Dušan J. Djordjevich, eds., *Political and Ideological Confrontations in Twentieth-Century Europe: Essays in Honor of Milorad M. Drachkovitch,* New York: Macmillan, 1996, 80. According to Tukhachevskii: "When we were passing along the frontier of East Prussia, hundreds and thousands of volunteers, Spartacists, and workers of no party, rushed to our colors and were formed into a German infantry brigade." (Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 243.)

106. *TUL,* doc. 59, 101–102. Lenin exaggerated. According to the highest Polish estimate twenty thousand German soldiers and eighty thousand German "Spartacists," or Communists, fought in the Red Army. (Quoted in Josef Korbel, *Poland between East and West: Soviet and German Diplomacy toward Poland 1919–1933,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, 89.) A Second Department report of 29 July 1920 pointed to "6,000 German officers and four purely German divisions." (*SWW,* part 9, doc. 9, 202, and doc. 14, 213. See also Piotr Madajczyk, "Niemcy wobec wojny polsko-radzieckiej 1920 r.," in Koryn, *Wojna polsko-sowiecka,* 179, and Janusz Szczepański, *Wojna 1920 roku na Mazowszu i Podlasiu,* Warsaw: NDAP, 1995, 234–235.)

107. Gerhard Wagner, *Deutschland und der polnisch-sowjetische Krieg 1920,* Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979, 117; see also Madajczyk, "Niemcy wobec wojny polsko-radzieckiej," 175–176, and Robert Himmer, "Soviet Policy toward Germany during the Russo-Polish War, 1920," *Slavic Review,* 12, 1976, 672.

108. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 249; teleprinter conversation between Tukhachevskii and S. Kamenev of 10 Aug. 1920, RGVA 33987/1/498/796–798.

109. *IIGV,* vol. 3, 336.

110. As Budennyi put it, "the vermin are choking us. We must either win or die." Quoted in I. Babel, *Konarmiia,* Letchworth: Bradda Books, 1965, 65. See also S. M. Budennyi, *Proidennyi put',* Moscow: VI, 1965, vol. 2, 261.

111. According to Budennyi, "the troops had reached the outer limit of human endurance . . . everywhere people were collapsing with exhaustion, unable to move." (Budennyi, *Proidennyi put',* vol. 2, 281.)

112. *DKF,* vol. 3, doc. 260, 227.

113. Trotsky to the Supreme Command, 17 July 1920, quoted in Tadeusz Krząstek, "Dlaczego Budionny nie zdążył nad Wisłę," in Koryn, *Wojna polsko-sowiecka,* 103.

114. Henryk Bułhak, "Wydarzenia polityczne i militarne na południowo-wschodnim teatrze działań wojennych," in Koryn, *Wojna polsko-sowiecka,* 70; the quotation from *DKF,* vol. 3, doc. 260, 227.

115. L. Kamenev to Lenin, Trotsky, Chicherin, and Krestinskii, 13 July 1920, RGASPI 2/1/14673.

116. *TUL,* doc. 54, 90.

117. *BRP,* doc. 91, 148.

118. Pipes, "New Materials on the Polish-Soviet War," 80. This conclusion is confirmed by Lenin's speech of 20 September 1920, when he stated with some exaggeration that "in gaining eastern Galicia, we had a base against all the contemporary states." (*TUL,* doc. 59, 107.)

119. For example, in his wire to Moscow of 14 August, Trotsky referred to "the routed Polish government." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 112, 186.) In his wire to Lenin of 24 July, Stalin considered Poland to be "defeated" already. (*BRP,* doc. 91, 148.)

120. Budennyi, *Proidennyi put',* 339.

121. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 99, 193; doc. 106, 207–208; doc. 107, 208.

122. Acting in accordance with Supreme Commander Kamenev's demand in a letter to Trotsky of 14 July that "from the military point of view, it is necessary to arrange for such conditions that would exclude any possibility of creating a period of time such that we would be deprived of the ability to develop active operations, while the opposing side would be able to use it for putting in order and reinforcing its armed forces." (I. V. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920 gg.,* Moscow: RAN IBiS, 1994, doc. 12, 303.)

123. The original note is written in French in Chicherin's hand, and signed by him "Vasilief," AVPRF 4/32/35/31. See also *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 110, 211.

124. The original note is written in French in Chicherin's hand, and signed by him "Toukhatchevski," AVPRF 4/32/35/24. See also *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 111, 211–212.

125. His unique post was officially termed "Under Secretary of State of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers." (Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 31.)

126. *DiM,* vol. 3, docs. 114, 115 and 118, pp. 216–217 and 221; docs. 120, 121 and 123, pp. 223–226 and 232–234.

127. *UPD,* vol. 2, doc. 36, 122.

128. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 121, 226.

129. Chicherin to Lenin, as the attachment to the Politburo session of 11 May 1920, RGASPI 17/3/77.

130. "Commission for Working out in Detail Negotiations with Poland" to the Politburo, 25 July 1920, AVPRF 4/32/37/1.

131. Jerzy Kochanowski, ed., "Rokowania pokojowe z Rosją Radziecką (VII–VIII 1920 r.) w relacji Kazimierza Stamirowskiego," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 2:1, 1992/1993, 129–139.

132. The Communists were to make up 40 percent of the workers' force; the rest was to be recruited from the left wing of the Polish Socialist Party. They were to receive arms from the Soviet Russian authorities, under the control of a certain number of three-member commissions, consisting of representatives of the Polish, Russian, and Norwegian trade unions. All of this "in the interests of the external and internal security of Poland," as the outline explained.

133. "Commission for Working out in Detail Negotiations with Poland" to the Politburo, 25 July 1920, AVPRF 4/32/37/1.

134. *PSV,* vol. 1, 150 n. 2. Petr G. Smidovich and Nikolai A. Skrypnik were appointed as members of the Soviet peace delegation. The secretary was G. P. Shtykgol'd. Karl Radek joined the delegation later.

135. The original idea was to demand that Poland turn over all surplus arms within ten days, but the Soviets then realized that such a large-scale operation required at least a month to be completed. (Chicherin to Danishevskii, 13 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40.)

136. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 84, 155–160.

137. *PSV,* vol. 1, unnumbered docs. quoted on 160 (the exchange between Stalin and Lenin; the quotation: Stalin to Lenin, 2 Aug. 1920); doc. 78, 149 (the Politburo on the Polish Revolutionary Committee).

138. As Stalin wired Lenin on 31 July 1920, "Wrangel continues furious attacks along the entire front." (*BRP,* doc. 96, 151–152; see also doc. 92, 149.)

139. Trotsky to Lenin, Krestinskii, and Kalinin, 2 Aug. 1920, RGVA 33987/1/498/794.

140. *DVP,* vol. 3, 81; *DBFP,* vol. 8, 680.

141. Piotr Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations, 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, 233.

142. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 149, 287.

143. It would appear from Chicherin's letter to the Politburo of 12 August 1920 that this time the delay was caused by the military staff of the Moscow radio center, rather than by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. (Mikhutina, *Pols'ko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 15, 311–313.)

144. *DiM,* vol. 3, 310 n. 2; doc. 150, 289–290 (quotation). See also "Rokowania pokojowe w relacji Stamirowskiego," 136–139.

145. *PSV,* doc. 91, 165–166.

146. The Polish Army would be allowed to keep only 30,000 rifles, 180 machine guns, 120 artillery pieces, 3,000 revolvers, 10,000 sabers, and 500 lances.

147. *PSV,* vol. 1, 182–184 n. 1.

148. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 110, 182.

149. Danishevskii to Chicherin, 14 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/10.

150. AVPRF 4/32/40/8.

151. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 105, 178.

152. Some of his more deranged political opponents maintained even that Piłsudski, as a former Socialist, was constantly in touch with Lenin by a secret telephone line. (Bohdan Skaradziński, "'Telefony' Lenin—Piłsudski," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 110, 1994, 92.

153. Jacques Weygand, *Weygand, mon père,* Paris: Flammarion, 1970, 167.

154. *La guerre polono-sovietique de 1919–1920,* Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1975, 116.

155. This phrase comes from Piłsudski's order of 15 Aug. 1920, *SWW,* part 1, doc. 1, 19.

156. Żeligowski, *Wojna w roku 1920,* 75ff.

157. Vitovt Putna, the commander of one of the Bolshevik divisions that fought at Radzymin, wrote in his memoirs that on the afternoon of 15 August, "the moment came when not only individual units but the whole mass of the army suddenly lost faith in the possibility of success against the enemy. It was as if the cord which we had been tightening since the Bug suddenly snapped." (Vitovt Putna, *K Visle i obratno,* Moscow, 1927, 134.)

158. Władysław Sikorski, *Nad Wisłą i Wkrą: Studjum z polsko-rosyjskiej wojny 1920 roku,* Lwów: ZNiO, 1928, 147.

159. Ryszard Juszkiewicz, *Działania militarne na Mazowszu północnym i w korytarzu pomorskim, 1920 rok,* Warsaw: Mako, 1997, 164–165. Ironically, for this raid, taken without Gen. Sikorski's approval, Gen. Karnicki was relieved of his duties. (Lech Wyszczelski, *Bitwa na przedpolach Warszawy,* Warsaw: Bellona, 2000, 262.)

160. Tukhachevski, "March Beyond the Vistula," 258–259.

161. *TUL,* doc. 59, 96, 100 and 106.

162. Karpus estimates, based on archival research, that 50,000 Bolsheviks were captured. (Zbigniew Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War and Internees Kept in Poland in 1918–1924,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2001, 61.) According to press announcements of that period, and the subsequent literature on the subject, the number was between 60,000 and 70,000.

Gerhard Wagner estimates the number of Bolshevik soldiers who crossed into Germany at 50,000. (Wagner, *Deutschland und der polnisch-sowjetische Krieg,* 11.) The most conservative estimate is that by Karpus, according to whom the number was as low as 30,000. (Zbigniew Karpus, "Problem internowanych bolszewickich i polskich w Prusach Wschodnich i w Niemczech w lipcu-listopadzie 1920 r.," in Stanisław L. Bagdziński and Jacek Staszewski, eds., *W 75-lecie Bitwy Warszawskiej 1920: Materiały z konferencji naukowej 30 XI—1 XII 1995 r.,* Włocławek: WTN, 1997, 174.) However, Karpus's estimate cannot be reconciled with the known number of over 48,000 Bolshevik troops in German internment as of late September; see note 163.

163. Wyszczelski estimates that 30,000 Bolsheviks returned through Lithuania. (Lech Wyszczelski, *Niemen 1920,* Warsaw: Bellona, 1991, 26.) The number of interned Bolshevik soldiers, according to German records, is given in Karol Jonca, "Postawa Niemiec w czasie wojny polsko-sowieckiej 1920 r.," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 127, 1999, 14–15, 17 and 22.

164. *La guerre polono-sovietique,* 31. This view has been shown to be erroneous by Piotr S. Wandycz and Tomasz Schramm, "Pilsudski et Weygand a la bataille de Varsovie," *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique,* 3, 2001, and by Zdzisław Musialik, *General Weygand and the Battle of the Vistula 1920,* London: J. Piłsudski Institute, 1987. As the latter author concluded, "Weygand's role in formulating the preliminary strategies of the Battle . . . was marginal, but his contribution to the technical execution of the plan, in such matters as the organization of transport and war supplies, was of great help to the Polish High Command." (Ibid., 99–100.)

165. This view found later its polemical expression in a volume edited by Jędrzej Giertych, *Rozważania o bitwie warszawskiej 1920-go roku,* London: KW, 1984. Recently published documents, however, leave no room for doubt that it was Piłsudski who authored the plan of the counteroffensive and directed its execution. (*SWW,* part 1, docs. 1–3, 16–24; Wandycz and Schramm, "Pilsudski et Weygand.")

166. This view has been well expressed by Col. Arciszewski, a participant in the battle, who pointed out that "besides the events intended by generals of both sides, there happened also things that no one had foreseen or ordered, and which to this day have not been explained. This concerns most of all the events that took place on and around the day of 15 August 1920." (Franciszek A. Arciszewski, *Cud nad Wisłą: Rozważania żołnierza,* London: Veritas, 1957.)

167. Norbert Barlicki of the Polish Socialist Party, Stanisław Grabski of the National Democrats, Władysław Kiernik of the "Piast" Peasant Party, Adam Mieczkowski of the National People's Alliance, Ludwik Waszkiewicz of the National Workers' Party, and Michał Wichliński of the Christian Democracy represented the Parliament; Władysław Wróblewski and Kazimierz Olszowski, the Department Director in the Foreign Ministry, represented the government; and Gen. Antoni Listowski represented the army. The chief secretary was Aleksander Ładoś.

168. Wróblewski had been a member of the government since 1918; he was also a notable lawyer and professor of administration and administrative law at the renowned Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Initially, the government suggested to the State Defense Council that Wróblewski be head of the peace delegation. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 169, 311.) Dąbski learned about his appointment only a day before departing. He tried to excuse

himself from that post, citing "my unpreparedness and the great responsibility that rested on the delegation," as he put it. Premier Witos, however, ruled out any change. (Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 25.)

169. Not to irritate Lloyd George, Kamenev decided, on his own account, to omit two important conditions: free transit and the arming of the workers. His omissions, though, irritated Chicherin. In any case, the Bolsheviks did not remove these conditions from the list subsequently shown to the Polish peace delegation at Minsk. (Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 15 including notes, 311–312; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 49–51.)

170. Accordingly, a member of the peace delegation, S. Grabski, expected that in case of Polish defeat in the Battle of Warsaw the delegation would be taken by its Soviet escorts not to Minsk but rather to the Butyrki prison in Moscow. Overall, however, the delegation was not at all in a defeatist mood, and its head, Dąbski, was indeed very optimistic. (Stanisław Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1989, vol. 2, 160.)

171. According to S. Grabski, at the 13 August joint meeting of the State Defense Council, the government, and the peace delegation, it was decided that in the last resort the minimum border line to be accepted was one drawn along the German trenches of 1915–1917. (Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* vol. 2, 157–158.) His statement is not corroborated by any other sources.

172. Jerzy Kochanowski, ed., "Porucznika Birnbauma 'Dziennik rokowań pokojowych w Mińsku 14–30 VIII 1920 roku,'" *Przegląd Wschodni,* 2:3, 1992/1993, 647–648.

173. *DiM,* vol. 3, docs. 168 and 169, 308–314.

174. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 118, 192.

175. Similar treatment had been accorded to both the Latvian and the Lithuanian peace delegations in Moscow. As Ioffe, the head of the Soviet delegation, reported to the Politburo: "The Latvian delegation is displeased with [their] living conditions in Moscow . . . They constantly make their protests to me: in their hotel they live in 30-degree-Celsius heat; they are fed so poorly, they only live on what they get from Riga; they have only had, as they put it, one and a half baths in a month and a half; there have never been any automobile [made available] . . . etc. The other day, the head of the delegation made me an official proposal to move negotiations, if not to Riga, then to Tartu [in Estonia]; 'otherwise, we will make off,' he said, 'as we can bear it no longer.' According to them, the Lithuanians can bear it no longer, either . . ." (Likely late June 1920, AVPRF 4/25/5.) At Baranowicze, the Polish armistice delegation was fed a diet of stale bread, canned Turkish peppers, and unsugared inferior tea. ("Rokowania pokojowe w relacji Stamirowskiego," 133–134.)

176. "Porucznika Birnbauma 'Dziennik rokowań,'" 652–656; Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* 160–161.

177. For instance, Danishevskii and Smilga, the commissar of the Western Front, resolved: "(1) to bring severity to the maximum; (2) to let out [of the quarters] only two people at a time and only delegates; . . . (5) . . . to deprive them of their radio equipment and to offer them our own for communication with Warsaw." (Iokhel' to Chicherin, 21 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/20.) Danishevskii acted according to Lenin's specific instructions to be "extremely tough" in dealing with the Poles. (*PSV,* vol. 1, 197 n. 2.)

178. Shtykgol'd to Chicherin, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/21.

179. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 184, 328–329; doc. 188, 335–336. For Chicherin's subsequent elucidation, which was not necessarily very convincing, see ibid., doc. 185, 331.

180. *PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 123, 196–197. Remarkably, Radek argued that "the diplomatic task—while the army is being reinforced and regrouped—lies in forcing the Poles to compromise themselves by breaking off peace negotiations." (Radek to Chicherin, Lenin, and Trotsky, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/22; also RGASPI 5/1/2001/19.)

181. *DiM,* vol. 3, docs. 188 and 189, 337–342.

182. Having learned of the victory on 22 August, the Poles were naturally "elated." One of them played on a trumpet the Polish national anthem, aptly titled "Poland Has Not Yet Perished." (Shtykgol'd to Chicherin, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40.)

183. Lenin ordered Chicherin on 14 August that Danishevskii begin the negotiations with "a solemn declaration" recognizing Poland's "independence and sovereignty." Lenin underlined the world "solemn" three times. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 176, 320–321; emphasis in the original.) Accordingly, such a declaration was included as the first point on the list of Soviet peace conditions. The members of the Soviet delegation felt, however, that it was "awkward to immediately accompany recognition of sovereignty by denial of such recognition," and suggested that the declaration should form a preamble. In the end, Danishevskii rejected their concerns as "purely formal and baseless." (Danishevskii to Chicherin, 14 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/10.)

184. This was, no doubt, a reference to the regions of Wilno and Grodno, considered by Poles to be populated mainly by Polish inhabitants and thus part of Polish ethnic territory.

185. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 193, 345–349.

186. According to Danishevskii, the "private" meeting took place on 25 August on Polish initiative. Danishevskii sent to it two members of his delegation: Radek and Smidovich, together with the secretary, Shtykgol'd. The Polish side was represented by its member Barlicki and the expert Feliks Perl, both Socialists; by its member Kiernik of the "Piast" Peasant Party; and by the expert Lucjan Altberg with no party affiliation. (Teleprinter conversation between Danishevskii and Chicherin of 25 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/17–19 and unnumbered preceding pp.)

According to S. Grabski, a member of the Polish delegation who did not participate in the meeting and wrote his memoirs much later, the Soviet interlocutors indicated that the border line would not be an issue in negotiations, if only Poland recognized Soviet Ukraine. The Poles, in turn, suggested trading Polish nonintervention in Ukraine for Soviet *désintéressement* in the Polish-Lithuanian quarrel. (Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* vol. 2, 164.) Grabski's account seems not to be corroborated by the cited conversation between Danishevskii and Chicherin.

187. As decided by the Politburo on 25 August 1920, RGASPI 17/3/104.

188. Teleprinter conversation between Danishevskii and Chicherin of 25 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/17–19 and unnumbered preceding pp.; Chicherin to Danishevskii, 24 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/24; Chicherin to Danishevskii, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/23 (quotation); Shtykgol'd to Chicherin, 23 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/21 (Polish slogan, "No Victor and No Vanquished").

189. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 137, 4.

190. According to Dąbski, Danishevskii tried to wear the Poles down with his "improbably long speeches," which were agitational in character and ill suited to the negotiating table. (Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 34.) Still, the Politburo gave him a "severe reprimand" for not

adhering strictly enough to Lenin's specific instructions to be "extremely tough" in dealing with the Poles, after he had permitted them to go to Sunday mass, and had let Wróblewski meet with the bishop of Minsk, Zygmunt Zieliński. (The Politburo's reprimand: *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 145, 13; Lenin's instructions: ibid., vol. 1, 197 n. 2.)

191. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* doc. 16, 315. At first, Moscow considered retaining Danishevskii as the nominal head of the delegation, while adding Ioffe as the actual negotiator acting behind the scenes. This idea, however, was opposed by both of them as "extremely impractical." (Ibid.)

192. Iokhel' to Chicherin, 22 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/13; includes the whole text of the order, which is dated August 20.

The Politburo condemned the order as "worse than tactless" and one "undermining the policy of the Party and government." (Quoted in Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* 210.) It was likewise condemned by the Revolutionary-Military Soviet of the Republic. Chicherin warned Danishevskii, however, that the news of it must not be permitted to spread among the soldiers "who may falsely understand it as, allegedly, a rejection of the slogans themselves." (Teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Danishevskii of 25 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/17–19 and unnumbered preceding pp.) It follows that Moscow supported the slogans, while condemning their proclamation at this particular time.

193. Right from the beginning, the Cheka opposed any foreign press coverage of the Minsk negotiations. Only after Chicherin's complaint did the Politburo decide to allow in Minsk a few correspondents of foreign leftist newspapers, with the caveat that they should be so tightly surrounded by security agents "as to be fully isolated." (Politburo session of 10 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 17/3/101.) On 13 August, Danishevskii informed Chicherin that the Cheka's Special Department had given an order to arrest the Italian journalist, Pannunzio. (AVPRF 4/32/40/9.)

194. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 200, 377.

195. Andrzej Pepłoński, *Wywiad w wojnie polsko-bolszewickiej 1919–1920,* Warsaw: Bellona, 1999, 282.

196. *DiM,* vol. 3, 380 n. 1, doc. 203, 380, and doc. 204, 381.

197. Chicherin to Iokhel', 30 Aug. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/20.

198. Politburo session of 1 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 17/3/106.

199. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 209, 394.

Chapter V. *Preliminary Peace Negotiations: Difficulties*

1. *BNDO,* vol. 1, doc. 34, 81–82, and doc. 46, 99–100.

2. And also on the Polish side of the Foch line, a demarcation line between Polish and Lithuanian troops drawn on 8 July 1919 by Marshal Ferdinand Foch of France. (*DiM,* vol. 3, 375–376 n. 2.) In Suwałki Province, the two lines were identical.

3. Piotr Łossowski, *Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 1966, 231–237; Piotr Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 1996, 144; *BNDO,* vol. 1, doc. 3, 28, and doc. 53, 115, see also doc. 112, 223–224.

4. *BNDO,* vol. 1, doc. 181, 370 (quotation); doc. 212, 433, and doc. 213, 434–435 (concentration of forces).

5. Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 155.

6. Lech Wyszczelski, *Niemen 1920,* Warsaw: Bellona, 1991, 40.

7. *DKF,* vol. 3, doc. 128, 110–111.

8. Mieczysław Wrzosek, *Wojny o granice Polski Odrodzonej 1918–1921,* Warsaw: WP, 1992, 324–325.

9. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 197, 368–369.

10. This territory did not include Wilno, which the Soviets, as already mentioned, turned over to the Lithuanians on 26 August 1920. (Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 155.)

11. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 199, 370–375.

12. *BNDO,* vol. 1, doc. 107, 216, and doc. 120, 237–239. Neither of the reports contained any of the views presented in an early draft, where Gen. Rozwadowski argued that "if the Soviets themselves really want peace, there is no doubt that they ought to withdraw their armies not only along the Minsk—Kalinkovichi—Korosten'—Zhmerinka railroad, but logically at once beyond the Dnieper and Dvina." (Quoted in Piotr Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations, 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, 380 n. 21.) It was obvious that these views would not be accepted by the council.

13. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 212, 400–411. It is noteworthy that Mikhutina summarizes Sapieha's twelve-page instruction by quoting just one sentence, taken out of context, emphasizing his mistrust of the Bolsheviks. (I. V. Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina 1919–1920 gg.*, Moscow: RAN IBiS, 1994, 223.) In this way, the whole meaning of the document is completely distorted. Unfortunately, this kind of treatment of sources is frequent in her book.

14. On the grounds that Petliura's troops were an independent entity and once the Soviets rejected any direct negotiations with him, the Poles were not going to get involved. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 212, 400–411.)

15. This condition was to provide for what Warsaw saw as ethnically Polish regions of Wilno and Grodno.

16. This condition was intended to make sure that West Volhynia, the western Polesie Marshes, and the Nowogródek region, although ethnically non-Polish, would stay on the Polish side of the border.

17. This condition had mainly in view the border and relations between Poland and Lithuania. Having secured Soviet *désintéressement,* the Poles would be fairly confident of regaining Wilno.

18. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 213, 412–422.

19. Mirosław Obiezierski, an observant expert with the Polish delegation, characterized its members and ranked them in importance as follows: "Prof. S. Grabski is the man who has the greatest influence among the delegation members." Barlicki, "is excellent at repartee, throws around jokes all the time, and many a time teases his colleagues, whether from the Right or the Left." Kiernik "is undoubtedly talented and quick on the uptake." Both Wasilewski and Kamieniecki "know [the Borderlands issue] well, as they have examined it in a scholarly manner and devoted to it their comprehensive monographs." "To have a complete picture, one should also mention the M.P.s: Mieczkowski, Wichliński, and Waszkiewicz, as well as Gen. Kuliński. They are the nicest members of the delegation—unaffected, kind, and undoubtedly very patriotic. Their conduct prepossesses everyone in their favor. Unfortunately, I have the impression that the voice of these four gentlemen does not carry any decisive weight in the delegation's debates, and

that they themselves are influenced by their other colleagues, especially by Grabski." (Mirosław Obiezierski, *Wspomnienia z polsko-rosyjskiej konferencji pokojowej ryskiej,* Warsaw, 1938, 10–11.)

20. As Prof. Kamieniecki put it later, the delegation's composition created "a precedent in the history of modern diplomacy." (Witold Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy warszawscy, 1900–1950,* Wrocław: TP Ossolineum, 1992, 31.)

21. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 258. See also P. N. Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii mir,* Moscow: Nauka, 1969, 132–133. This is how Obiezierski saw the members of the Soviet delegation: "Prof. Manuil'skii represents the type popularly known in Russia as 'short but smart [*lovkii malyi*]' . . . He speaks Polish quite well and willingly uses the Polish language during the sessions of the commission." Obolenskii "makes externally a good impression, [having] the looks of a Russian great landowner; he speaks quite sensibly and skillfully." Kirov, by contrast, "has an unintelligent look about him." (Obiezierski, *Wspomnienia,* 16–17.) Obolenskii was indeed a scion of a princely family.

22. According to Chicherin's special instruction of 1 August 1920, members of a Soviet peace delegation were subordinated to its head, having to "maintain discipline" and conform to his decisions, "even if they disagreed with them." (AVPRF 4/32/37/2.)

23. To counterbalance somewhat these contrasts between the two delegation heads, one may add that both their immediate superiors, Sapieha and Chicherin, belonged to old aristocratic families.

24. For Dąbski's biography, see Stanisław Giza, *Jan Dąbski: Całe życie dla ludu,* Warsaw: LSW, 1979.

25. Obiezierski, *Wspomnienia,* 10. According to Obiezierski, "Dąbski does not make . . . the impression of being amiable; one can see, first and foremost, his lack of polished manners; brusque and dry, he is not . . . to the liking of the delegation's wider circles; terse, he does not seek the company of his colleagues." (Ibid.)

26. According to a middleman between the Polish and the Soviet delegation, "Dąbski has said that he will become head of the government if he returns with peace." (Leshchinskii, Rozenberg, and Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/25.)

27. According to Obiezierski, "Ioffe makes a very good impression—witty and undoubtedly very shrewd in the debates." (Obiezierski, *Wspomnienia,* 16.) An American journalist described Ioffe as, "in appearance and demeanor, the perfect type of diplomatist." (*New York Times,* 13 Oct. 1920, 1.)

28. On 3 July 1918, Lenin wrote: "I fully appreciate Ioffe's work and, without question, approve it; however, I insistently demand that Ioffe behave as behooves an ambassador, superior to whom is the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and observe the proprieties, refrain from abusing and slighting others, and inquire with the Commissar about everything important." Apparently, Ioffe complied with Lenin's demand, but a year later he still complained to Trotsky that Chicherin had been named commissar of foreign affairs "even though everyone knows what kind of diplomat he is." Difference of characters and work styles was a factor contributing to Ioffe's dislike of Chicherin. (Quoted in Nadezhda Ioffe, *Moi otets Adol'f Abramovich Ioffe: Vospominaniia, dokumenty i materialy,* Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 1997, 36 and doc. 10, 74; also 35.)

29. Former co-secretary of the mixed legal-political commission to Prof. Wandycz, 18 July 1965, PCPW.

30. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 125.

31. For instance, Iakov Ganetskii, the Soviet minister to Riga, reported: "Tonight, there took place a scandalous incident involving our diplomatic courier, Gerson. He went to a concert arranged by Russian artists; the concert was public but to enter one had to be recommended. Gerson was led in by one of the artists. Having noticed Gerson, some among the public began to make a noise and shout 'Out with the Cheka! Out with butchers!' demanding the removal of Gerson . . . who did immediately leave the concert." (Ganetskii to Chicherin, 26 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/76.)

32. Andrzej Pepłoński, *Wywiad w wojnie polsko-bolszewickiej 1919–1920,* Warsaw: Bellona, 1999, 69–70.

33. As Ioffe put it: "That the Latvians intercept [our wires] and likely pass [them] to the Poles stands to reason but apparently our codes have not been broken." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 12 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/275.)

34. Opel' and Ioffe to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/40.

35. Politburo sessions of 1 and 6 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 17/3/106 and 107.

36. *TUL,* doc. 59, 108 (quotations).

37. For instance, Stalin asked the Politburo in writing to establish such a commission. (*BRP,* doc. 100, 156.)

38. *TUL,* doc. 59, 108–109.

39. Teleprinter conversation between Danishevskii and Chicherin of 25 Aug. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/17–19 and unnumbered, following 16.

40. *TUL,* doc. 59, 111–112.

41. For instance, Lenin's two motivational visits with Red Army troops in mid-September were a total fiasco. According to a member of the Estonian mission in Moscow, "he was received extremely badly. Due to perpetual interruptions, he had difficulty addressing the troops—the soldiers calling loudly for 'peace and more bread.'" (British Consulate in Tallin to London, 25 Sept. 1920, YUL, reel 2, vol. 5421, 104–104A.)

42. On 16 September 1920, Chicherin requested such a report from Ioffe for the needs of the Politburo and the Plenary Session of the Central Committee. (AVPRF 4/32/35/10.)

43. Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/13.

44. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 257.

45. Rozenberg and Ioffe to Chicherin, 25 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/46.

46. Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/13.

47. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 222, 433–435.

48. The text of the mandate is quoted in Ioffe to Chicherin, 22 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/43.

49. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 154, 43.

50. Ioffe to Chicherin, 14 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/5.

51. Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/10.

52. Ioffe, Manuil'skii, and Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 22 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/14; see also *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 165, 61.

53. Ioffe, Manuil'skii, and Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 22 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/14; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 164, 58, and doc. 163, 57; see also Chicherin to Ioffe, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/19, and *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 165, 61.

54. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 163, 57.

55. Strictly speaking, Ioffe got a little ahead of himself, as the government of Soviet Belarus had not yet been formed. (Mikhutina, *Pol'sko-sovetskaia voina,* 222.)

56. Ioffe to Chicherin, 14 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/6; Chicherin to Ioffe, 14 Sept. 1920, ibid./7.

57. Chicherin to Ioffe, 14 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/7; Ioffe to Chicherin, 17 Sept. 1920, ibid./11.

58. An unofficial meeting on 19 September, and the first plenary session on 21 September.

59. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 19 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/12; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 163, 54–55.

60. Ioffe, Manuil'skii, and Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 22 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/14; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 163, 56, and doc. 169, 68.

61. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 164, 59.

62. Ioffe, Manuil'skii, and Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 22 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/14.

63. Jan Jacek Bruski, "Ryga w perspektywie ukraińskiej," in Mieczysław Wojciechowski, ed., *Traktat Ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, 356. Note also that a few members of the Polish government, who had been involved in the signing of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance of 21 April 1920, including Finance Minister Władysław Grabski and Deputy Foreign Minister Stefan Dąbrowski, resigned in protest. (Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki 1921: Geneza, rokowania, traktat, komisje mieszane,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, 42.)

64. Quoted in Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 41.

65. Krichevskii to Chicherin, 23 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/39–42.

66. As late as 24 September, Ioffe requested some minor revisions in the final text of the declaration already approved by both the Party Conference and the VTsIK. For that reason, he put off to 5 P.M. the negotiation session originally scheduled to begin at noon. Two of his proposed revisions were indeed approved by Moscow. (Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/51–52; Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Sept. 1920, ibid./50.)

The Moscow leadership did not bother to consult about the VTsIK declaration with their lesser brethren in Khar'kov. As a result, the declaration had no formal backing from Soviet Ukraine, even though it was ostensibly an equal partner in negotiations. This oversight was corrected only on 5 October, when Moscow passed to Ioffe a wire from Rakovskii, stating that the Ukrainian authorities "unconditionally" supported the declaration and wished "to establish good Soviet relations [*sic*]" with Poland. The latter claim was likely nothing more than an amusing spelling error, with *dobrososedskie* (good neighborly) misspelled as *dobrosovetskie* (good Soviet). (Moscow to Ioffe, 5 Oct. 1920, the original, AVPRF 4/32/41/1.)

67. As Chicherin put it, "the VTsIK declaration is meant to be widely publicized as it aims at both the Polish and our masses." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/13.)

68. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 83–86.

69. Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/13.

70. Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/42.

71. Krichevskii to Chicherin, 25 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 5/1/2001/43.

72. High Command, General Staff wire 43100/II of 25 Sept. 1920, quoted in Maj. Polakiewicz to Gen. Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1.

73. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 261–262; Aleksander Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," *Niepodległość,* 16, 1937, 232–235.

74. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 86–91.

75. Ioffe's demands in regard to East Galicia were likely affected by the parallel negotiations between the Soviet and East Galician delegations at Riga. The East Galicians requested Soviet support for the holding of a plebiscite in East Galicia. (Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 210.)

76. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 224, 437–441; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 92–96.

77. *PSV,* vol. 2, 59 n. 1.

78. Chicherin apparently thought this excessive, for he so instructed Ioffe on 30 September: "Do not haggle a lot regarding the border, and in case of Polish opposition do not be afraid to get to the maximum limit [of concessions], shown in the coded telegram of the . . . Central Committee. This should not delay negotiations. Speed is of the essence, there should be less haggling; one could even get almost immediately to the limit indicated by the Central Committee. One needs an approach that is simple, clear, and can easily influence the masses. If the Poles resist regarding the border, we will move without any delay to our last word and publicize it as such." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/32–33.)

79. According to Grabski, it was he who suggested to Dąbski that such a break be taken. (Stanisław Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1989, vol. 2, 176.)

80. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 264–265.

81. According to Ioffe, he sent his coded draft to Chicherin on 28 September, before the session of the Main Commission. Why Chicherin did not receive it in time is not clear, although it seems there may have been a problem with decoding it. Note that the message in which Ioffe informed Chicherin that the draft was being sent was decoded only on 4 October. (Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 28 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/39.) The problem with decryption of coded messages appears to have been fairly common. For instance, on 23 January 1920, Chicherin wrote: "I hope that the cipher clerks won't screw up the deciphering, as has already happened several times." (Chicherin to Ioffe, AVPRF 4/32/35/1–4.)

82. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 168, 65. Kumaniecki's assertion in *Pokój ryski,* 45, that Ioffe's draft of preliminary peace was influenced by Trotsky, as the leader of the war party, is not borne out by the available evidence.

83. Rozenberg and Ioffe to Chicherin, 29 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/18.

84. Iordanskii to Chicherin, rec. 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/70–75.

85. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 169, 66–68, and doc. 170, 69.

86. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 226, 445.

87. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 120; see also *DiM,* vol. 3, 445 n. 2.

88. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 1 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/23.

89. Leshchinskii, Rozenberg, and Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/25.

90. Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/26. According to Manuil'skii, the Soviet peace delegation supported the East Galician delegation "as long as they compromise both Polish occupation [of East Galicia] and Petliura, without ourselves getting involved to any degree." (Manuil'skii and Ioffe to Chicherin, 28 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/15.)

91. This was not just a bluff, as at the same time Wasilewski conducted talks with I. Cherepuk, the representative of the Belarusian émigré government of Lastouski. (Andrzej Czerniakiewicz, "Polsko-białoruskie stosunki wzajemne w końcowym etapie wojny polsko-sowieckiej," in Andrzej Ajnenkiel, ed., *Rok 1920: Z perspektywy osiemdziesięciolecia,* Warsaw: IH PAN, 2001, 199–200.)

92. Ioffe, Leshchinskii, and Rozenberg to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/22.

93. It was Tallents who proposed the meeting through the Lithuanian representative, Naruševičius. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 169, 67.) According to the information received by Ioffe from "reliable sources," the British representative, alarmed by the break in negotiations, feared that "the Poles have gone off their heads again." (Rozenberg and Ioffe to Moscow, 29 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/16.) At the meeting, as Ioffe reported, "Tallents asked me point-blank whether or not we consider Britain's intervention and its pressure on Poland to be useful. I replied that from my personal point of view it is necessary." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 1 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/21–22.) Dąbski knew about the British-Soviet collusion. (Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* vol. 2, 178; see also Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/26.) Ioffe characterized Tallents as "a great Russophile." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 4 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/45.)

94. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 1 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/23. This plan was subsequently approved by Lenin and Chicherin. (*TUL,* doc. 60, 116, and *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 174, 85, respectively.)

Chapter VI. *Preliminary Peace Negotiations: Breakthrough*

1. State Defense Council session of 1 Oct. 1920, in PROP, 312–317. See also Piotr S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations, 1917–1921,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, 266 and 382.

2. Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/22. Ioffe's report to Chicherin of 2 October 1920 confirms clearly that the first confidential meeting was on Dąbski's initiative (ibid./27). Dąbski's convoluted statement in his book, vaguely suggesting that it was Ioffe who proposed the meeting, was probably designed to lessen the criticism he faced in Poland for having conducted negotiations by means of confidential meetings. (Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 98.)

3. Ioffe reacted to Dąbski's observation in his 1 October report to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii: "In this case, the VTsIK declaration indeed has made a blunder, and we all failed to notice that." (AVPRF 4/32/36/27.)

4. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 1 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/27. See also Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 104–109.

5. Mieczysław Pruszyński, "Rozmowa z Aleksandrem Ładosiem: Jak straciliśmy Mińsk i federację z Białą Rusią," *Bunt Młodych,* 25 Jan. 1936, reprinted in Mieczysław Pruszyński, *Tamci,* Warsaw: Alfa, 1992, 37–38.

6. Aleksander Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," *Niepodległość,* 16, 1937, 236 and 238. Ładoś's version was subsequently corroborated by Kamieniecki who wrote that Ioffe's "declarations and our Intelligence made the situation clear: in the southern, Ukrainian

sector, the Soviets would not cede even an inch of ground east of the Zbrucz; in the northern, Belarusian parts, every concession was possible." (Witold Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy warszawscy, 1900–1950,* Wrocław: TP Ossolineum, 1992, 33.) However, it is obvious from the messages exchanged between Ioffe, Chicherin, and Lenin, that the Soviets never considered giving Poland "every concession" in Belarus, and that Ioffe never declared any such intention. Thus, the Second Department misinformed the delegation.

7. Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski,* London: Gryf, 1985, vol. 2, 551–552. Eberhardt likewise maintains that "the Bolshevik side intended to give back [*sic*] to Poland a fairly large area between the Dvina, Dnieper, and Berezina," but the Poles declined. (Piotr Eberhardt, "Wizje i projekty polskiej granicy wschodniej w latach 1914–1921," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 5:2, 1998, 357.)

8. Beata Pietrzak, "Leon Wasilewski na konferencji w Rydze," in Mieczysław Wojciechowski, ed., *Traktat Ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, 349.

9. Lenin's handwritten instructions for Ioffe, as an attachment to the minutes of the Central Committee's plenary session of 23 Sept. 1920, RGASPI 17/2/35/5.

10. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 186, 97.

11. Pruszyński, "Rozmowa z Aleksandrem Ładosiem," 38.

12. Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 30 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/76, and *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 188, respectively.

13. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 163, 54–55, and doc. 169, 66–68.

14. *TUL,* doc. 60, 116.

15. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 172, 81.

16. Lenin's alacrity was justified, considering that Sapieha wired Dąbski on the same day that the Polish government was interested in a free Belarus, cleared of Soviet troops and administration. (Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 267.)

17. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 137, 4–5.

18. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 110.

19. Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 233.

20. Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy,* 33; see also note 6 in this chapter. It is noteworthy that the French representative in Riga likewise maintained that Moscow had given Ioffe instructions "to make every concession possible to the Poles." (Gen. Henrys to Savinkov, 25 Sept. 1920, TsKhIDK 461/1/155/18.)

21. As the federalist military expert, Maj. Karol Polakiewicz, reported to Piłsudski, "Waszkiewicz, the M.P., followed our instructions." (Polakiewicz to Piłsudski, 20 Oct. 1920, AGND 5279/T1, 2.)

22. For instance, Polakiewicz complained that Waszkiewicz supported the federalist solution "with neither authority nor force, and often made mistakes." (Polakiewicz to Piłsudski, 20 Oct. 1920, AGND 5279/T1, 2.)

23. Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 234–238. Wasilewski and Kamieniecki conducted, at the time, talks with Lastouski and members of his Belarusian government. (Mirosław Obiezierski, *Wspomnienia z polsko-rosyjskiej konferencji pokojowej ryskiej,* Warsaw, 1939, 14–16 and 21.)

24. Quoted in Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Sept. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/26.

25. Remarks by Eugeniusz Romer, the famous geographer and cartographer (Witold Wojdyło, "Traktat w Rydze w koncepcjach politycznych obozu narodowego ze szczególnym

uwzględnieniem roli Stanisława Grabskiego," in Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski,* 54); and by Kamieniecki (see Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy,* 31–32).

26. Stanisław Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1989, vol. 2, 169–176.

27. Grabski, *Pamiętniki,* vol. 2, 175. According to Ładoś, "the highest State circles," i.e., the government and the Chief of State, did not pay much attention to the details of the territorial settlement, as they assumed that the Bolsheviks would soon be ousted from power and the whole peace treaty would have to be renegotiated. (Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 234.) Ładoś's hint, however, that Grabski was "yielding" on the issue of the Polish-Soviet border for the same reason (ibid.) is obviously untrue, as is clear from the main text.

28. Kuliński's abstention can be inferred from Maj. Polakiewicz's report to Piłsudski of 20 Oct. 1920, AGND 5279/T1, 1–2. At the end of the sentence, naming some of the delegates who "voted" with Grabski, Polakiewicz adds that Gen. Kuliński "went with him," while not saying that he voted with him. Indeed, his abstention meant in effect Grabski's victory. Moreover, Polakiewicz, who as a federalist was enraged at Kuliński, characterized him as "a secret National Democrat," which is consistent with the latter's abstaining rather than openly voting with Grabski. Wojdyło also maintains that Gen. Kuliński abstained, although he fails to cite his source. (Wojdyło, "Traktat w Rydze," 56.) The High Command's instructions to support federalism: Polakiewicz to Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1.

29. Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy,* 31–32.

30. Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 237–238.

31. Military expert Lieut. Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1.

32. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 110.

33. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, 2 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/29. See also Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 110–113. According to Dąbski, he promised to sign the preliminaries "within two to three days." Moreover, he recalls that Ioffe cited the Supreme Command line (the Szczara, Ogiński Canal, Jasiołda, and Styr) as the maximum concession allowable under his instructions. Yet, this border line was less favorable to the Poles than the one Ioffe had indicated the day before! Moreover, as already pointed out, Lenin instructed him on 2 October, just before the second confidential meeting, to agree to the border line east of the Lida-Baranowicze railroad. Ioffe reported to Chicherin after the meeting that he presented to Dąbski "our latest border line," meaning undoubtedly the one indicated by Lenin. It follows that Dąbski's account is inaccurate.

34. As is clear from the preceding chapters, the Soviets had never made Poland a peace proposal which included any specific territorial terms. Ioffe likely referred to some border proposal made by Russia to the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk in early 1918.

35. No evidence indicates that the Polish delegation demanded the Grabski corridor mainly to please France. On the contrary, there is evidence both that the Polish delegation was not concerned about France, and that the latter kept aloof from the Riga negotiations. Moreover, the idea of creating some physical barrier between Russia and Germany had been one of the principal tenets of Polish diplomacy. (See, for instance, Polish embassy in Stockholm to Warsaw, 18 Oct. 1919, TsKhIDK 308/12/138/280–282.) Nonetheless, considering the constant Soviet fear that France firmly opposed Poland's coming to terms

with Soviet Russia and would try to prevent the implementation of any resulting peace treaty, Ioffe's mistaken analysis may have been the decisive factor in the Soviet acceptance of the Grabski corridor.

36. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 173, 82–84.

37. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 113–116.

38. Ioffe to Chicherin, 4 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/30.

39. Lenin's instructions in this case were as follows: "State solemnly and publicize: 5 October has passed, Poland is responsible for the winter campaign." (*TUL,* doc. 60, 116; emphasis in the original.)

40. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 117–119. See also Shenshev to Chicherin, 5 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/2.

41. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 121 (quotation), and 126.

42. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 186, 104.

43. Quotations from the High Command, General Staff wires of 25 Sept. 1920, and of 29 Sept. 1920, respectively, both quoted in Polakiewicz to Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1.

44. High Command, General Staff wire of 29 Sept. 1920, quoted in Polakiewicz to Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1. The courier with Piłsudski's instructions regarding the border line was delayed on his way and arrived in Riga as late as 17 October, after the signing of the preliminaries. According to these instructions, the border was to run along the front line on the day of the signing of the preliminaries. In order to allow the Polish Army to take as much territory as possible, the delegation was to do its utmost to delay negotiations. (Ganetskii to Chicherin, 19 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/67.) The High Command's warning about the need to consult with the Allies: High Command, General Staff wire no. 45537/II, date unknown, quoted in Polakiewicz to Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1.

45. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 269. Yet, he continued to work together with the rest of the delegation, headed the Polish side of the mixed military commission, and signed the preliminaries.

46. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Menzhinskii, 5 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/32.

47. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 234, 462–463.

48. Chicherin's circular to Ioffe of 5 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/37–39. See note 35 in this chapter on the Polish delegation's lack of concern about France and the latter's lack of great interest in the Riga negotiations.

49. For instance, at the State Defense Council of 8 September, discussing how to deal with the Lithuanians who had taken, as Foreign Minister Sapieha put it, "unquestionably Polish territory," Piłsudski stressed that "declaration of war is useless because then we must march on Kaunas, and this we don't need." (PROP, 285–293.) Moreover, he was willing to presume that the Lithuanian acts of "violation of neutrality and even co-operation with the Bolsheviks" were made under "duress," given "Lithuania's weakness." (*SWW,* part 10, doc. 6, 225–226.) The quotation in the main text: ibid.

50. Piotr Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski 1918–1920,* Warsaw: KiW, 1996, 164–165; Lucjan Żeligowski, *Zapomniane prawdy,* London, 1943, 34.

51. For the text of the agreement, see *SWW,* part 10, doc. 8, 233–236. The Poles treated it as a military agreement with no political consequences, while the Lithuanians claimed

it to be a treaty with all its political consequences. Its original text, however, written in French, bears the title "Arrangement" rather than "Traité." (Alfred Erich Senn, *The Great Powers, Lithuania, and the Vilna Question, 1920–1928,* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966, 45–46.)

52. *BNDO,* vol. 2, doc. 645, 633.

53. Quotations from several Lithuanian authors describing the uprising, as well as accounts by Polish soldiers, can be found in Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski,* 181–183, and Grzegorz Łukomski, *Walka Rzeczypospolitej o kresy północno-wschodnie 1918–1920: Polityka i działania militarne,* Poznań: UAM, 1994, 153–154.

54. Żeligowski, *Zapomniane prawdy,* 34.

55. Zenon Krajewski, *Geneza i dzieje wewnętrzne Litwy Środkowej, 1920–1922,* Lublin: OSPiS PZKS, 1996, 53–54; Jerzy Turonek, *Wacław Iwanowski i odrodzenie Białorusi,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1992, 85–86.

56. *BNDO,* vol. 2, doc. 638, 626; *DKF,* vol. 3, doc. 149, 126.

57. *BNDO,* vol. 2, doc. 648, 637, and *DKF,* vol. 3, doc. 149, 126, respectively. Trotsky likewise pointed out in his 6 October wire to the Revolutionary-Military Committee of the Western Front that "the next days will have immense significance as regards terms of peace." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 175, 85–86.)

58. *BNDO,* vol. 2, table 6, 946; doc. 811, 908; and doc. 790, 865.

59. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 241, 489, and 460 n. 1; Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku: Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920,* Toruń: UMK, 1999, 39–41.

60. Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska 1920 roku,* Warsaw: GiW, 1937, 305–306.

61. Adam Zamoyski, *The Battle for the Marchlands,* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981, 33.

62. Y. Korablev, *Lenin—the Founder of the Soviet Armed Forces,* Moscow: Progress, 1977, 121 and 123–124. Already by the beginning of 1919, the Soviet armaments industry produced monthly nearly 100,000 rifles, over 500 machine guns, nearly 50 field guns, over 35,000,000 rifle cartridges, over 90,000 artillery shells, and many other arms. Subsequently, production of armaments actually increased. (Ibid.)

63. *BNDO,* vol. 1, 14.

64. Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska,* 307.

65. According to an official report to Lenin of 17 May 1920, "troops, constantly operating in the rear, having as their task to punish the population, get demoralized to the point of becoming bandits themselves, and in the best case simply cowards and drunkards." (*PSV,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 104.)

66. *TUL,* doc. 59, 95–114, especially 111–112 and 114.

67. See above, "The Understanding of 5 October."

68. Teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Ioffe, likely of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/18. The Belvedere Palace in Warsaw's historic Łazienki Park was the official residence of the Chief of State.

69. Chicherin to Ioffe, 8 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/38.

70. There were, in addition, the territorial and the legal-political commissions, as well as the commission for exchange of prisoners of war.

71. Ioffe to Chicherin, 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/11. In addition, the Polish demand was based on a precedent, since according to the Soviet peace treaties with Estonia,

Lithuania, and Latvia, each one of them was to receive an amount of gold ranging from 3 to 15 million rubles.

72. Ioffe to Chicherin, 4 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/30.

73. Teleprinter conversation between Ioffe and Chicherin of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/13–14.

74. The Polish military experts, acting on instructions from the High Command, urged that eleven days be demanded. The delegation, however, "so as not to irritate the Bolsheviks," decided to argue that six days were a minimum necessitated by communications. (Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1; teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Ioffe of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/15–17.) It appears that only three days were in fact necessary. (Lorents to Chicherin, cc: Ioffe, 15 Oct. 1920, ibid./63.)

75. Chicherin actually argued that three days should be enough; Ioffe, however, was more conciliatory. (Teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Ioffe of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/15.)

76. Ioffe to Chicherin, 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/11.

77. Teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Ioffe of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/13–20. The Poles argued that unlike themselves, the Soviets were concluding what they considered "a disadvantageous peace"; therefore, the Polish terms of armistice should be accepted as a guarantee of Soviet sincerity. Ioffe suspected that these terms might have been influenced by France, which wanted to keep Soviet troops at the Polish front and prevent their transfer to the Wrangel front. (Ibid.)

78. Ioffe to Chicherin, 7 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/36.

79. Teleprinter conversation between Ioffe and Chicherin of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/17.

80. And he meant it literally. (Teleprinter conversation between Ioffe and Chicherin of 9 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/13–14. See also ibid./19.)

81. Ładoś, "Wasilewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 238–239.

82. Polakiewicz to Piłsudski, 20 Oct. 1920, AGND 5279/T1. In his unpublished memoirs, Ładoś takes credit for this delay, claiming he was approached by Lieut.-Col. Ignacy Matuszewski, the chief of the Second Department, with the request "to delay the signing of the armistice for 2–3 days." The delay was necessary to allow Polish troops to capture Minsk before the cessation of hostilities. It was imperative to recover a Second Department archive that had been left behind in the city; its capture by the Soviets would mean certain death for many people. (Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki 1921: Geneza, rokowania, traktat, komisje mieszane,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, doc. 3, 180.) Once again, Ładoś's recollections are unreliable, as there is conclusive evidence that Matuszewski was not in Riga at the time. (Janusz Cisek and Włodzimierz Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach ryskich," in Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski,* 76–77.) Most importantly, military expert Maj. Polakiewicz of the Second Department reported to Piłsudski that the delay was possible "thanks to the joint action of technical personnel and experts, over whom I had influence, but mainly thanks to secretaries Janikowski and Wyszyński." Ładoś likely did not participate in any delaying action, for all that Polakiewicz had to say about him was: "full of himself, antagonizing everyone, strong influence over Dąbski, harmful, of little value." (Polakiewicz to Piłsudski, ibid., 2 and 4.) According to Soviet sources, the signing had to be put off by twenty-four hours as a result of the minute examination of

the final texts of the preliminaries by the Poles. (Obolenskii to Chicherin, 13 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/51.)

83. Ioffe to Moscow, 6 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/3; see also Shenshev to Shakhov, to be passed to Chicherin, 8 Oct. 1920, ibid./4.

84. Two days: Chicherin to Ioffe, rec. 13 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/37–38, and Chicherin to Ganetskii, 12 Oct. 1920, ibid./25/9/16. Three days: teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Lorents, likely 13 Oct. 1920, ibid./32/40/67–69 and 39. It is noteworthy that Ioffe failed to make even the slightest complaint about the break in communications with Chicherin, and completely ignored his laments. Indeed, he may actually have been relieved that the break prevented the anxious Chicherin from pestering him with questions about every little clause of the agreements. After the signing, with communications restored, Ioffe just assured him that "there is no reason to be anxious," and excused himself from answering his questions, ostensibly because "the train [for Moscow] is leaving in 10 minutes." Thus, Chicherin had to content himself with grilling merely Lorents, and he did it in a very detailed, nervous, and suspicious manner. (Ibid.)

85. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. quoted 460 n. 1.

86. Polakiewicz to Kuliński, 6 Oct. 1920, AGND, attachment to 5279/T1; Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1. To a certain extent, the High Command may have been misled by Gen. Kuliński's wire of 10 October, indicating that, according to the terms of the armistice, Polish troops would remain in their positions at the cessation of hostilities, while the neutral zone would be created by the Bolsheviks' withdrawal. The wire failed to stress, however, that Polish troops were to withdraw to the border line after ratification of the preliminary rather than the definitive peace. (Kuliński to the High Command, 10 Oct. 1920, quoted in Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, ibid., 4.)

87. Ioffe to Chicherin, 7 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/36.

88. Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1, 2. This Polish concession was particularly deplored by military expert Lieut. Birnbaum, who argued that the only "real guarantee" that the Bolsheviks fulfill the terms of the preliminaries would be to "keep the army at the front line . . . until the moment of concluding the definitive treaty." (Ibid.)

89. Ioffe to Chicherin, 7 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/36.

90. That the final terms were agreed upon on 10 October is confirmed by Shemiakin to Chicherin, 10 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/26.

91. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 234, 462–463.

92. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 238, 478.

93. Sapieha to Dąbski, 12 Oct. 1920, *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 238, 478; Witos to Dąbski, rec. 12 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/40–41. These two coded wires were given to the Soviets by someone within the Polish delegation. Ioffe's assistant, Opel', complained that "due to high salaries, they have great demands—they demanded from me 50,000 German marks, . . . this includes also the services of a middleman. I'm passing the coded wires. If you find them plausible, give me directives as to the scale of financing to develop the connection which they offer to make permanent. Send a man to whom I could hand over the connection." (Opel' and Ioffe to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1920, ibid.) That a permanent connection was subsequently established is suggested by Ganetskii to Chicherin, 22 Oct. 1920, and clear from Ganetskii to Chicherin, 8 Nov. 1920, see ibid./41/71 and 80, respectively.

94. From Riga to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/10; Kuliński to Piłsudski, rec. 13 Oct. 1920, AGND 4839/T1.

95. *New York Times,* 13 Oct. 1920, 1.

96. According to the Associated Press, Ioffe likewise "referred to the peace as 'a peace without victory and without vanquished.'" (*New York Times,* 13 Oct. 1920, 1.)

97. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 124. Interestingly, the London *Times* surmised that "the border Poland has given herself by this treaty may well last a long time." (Ibid., 13 Oct. 1920, 9.)

98. In this context, the term "Soviet state" replaces the phrase "Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine" originally used in the preliminaries, as if they were two separate states. Soviet Belarus, while recognized by Poland, was otherwise ignored by the treaty, as if it were a part of Soviet Russia.

99. While it was not said expressly, this clause referred obviously to the hostages held by the Soviet state, since Poland did not take hostages.

100. In practical terms, this clause referred to the property taken away or evacuated from Poland into the depths of Russia after the outbreak of the Great War.

101. As Lorents explained to the ever-suspicious Chicherin, the exchange of ratification documents was to take place in Liepaja, "because the Poles . . . are afraid to arrive late in Riga, as they must go there through [Mažeikiai, a junction on the Liepaja—Riga railroad belonging to unfriendly] Lithuania." (Teleprinter conversation between Lorents and Chicherin, likely 13 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/40/67–69.)

102. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 236, 465–472.

103. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 237, 476–477.

104. This clause meant, in effect, that Polish troops were to withdraw from the front line to the border line. Soviet troops, in turn, were to move forward toward the border line.

105. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 236, 472–475.

106. Stanisław Grabski, *The Polish-Soviet Frontier,* London: Polish Information Center, 1945, 28.

107. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations,* 270.

108. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 186, 97.

109. Chicherin, undated handwritten note, AVPRF 4/32/35/26.

110. As military expert Lieut. Birnbaum pointed out, "the only real guarantee" that the Soviets would fulfill their obligations would be to keep "the army at the front line . . . until the definitive treaty is reached." According to Birnbaum, Polish military and civilian experts agreed, and were able to prove to the delegation, "that, from the viewpoint of international law, a state of war ceases only with ratification of a definitive treaty." (Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1, 1–3.)

111. *New York Times,* 13 Oct. 1920, 1.

112. At the same time, *The Times* argued that "such moral and material progress as has reached the [Borderlands] comes almost entirely from Poland." Moreover, "no other particular line" appeared to be more suitable than the agreed-upon border, since "there are no geographical features to provide a natural dividing line between the Poles and Russians, and in the absence of topographical obstacles the Poles streamed eastward and north-eastward until it is also impossible exactly to define the correct ethnographical frontier." (Ibid., 13 Oct. 1920, 9.)

113. Their indignation knew no bounds especially after their representative, sent to Riga, returned with the story that "Ioffe gladly conceded the Borderlands up to the Dnieper and Dvina, but Stanisław Grabski, who behind the backs of the delegation conducted all negotiations with Ioffe, . . . contented himself with the present armistice line." (Edward Woyniłłowicz, *Wspomnienia 1847–1928,* Wilno, 1931, part 1, 298–299.)

114. P. N. Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii mir,* Moscow: Nauka, 1969, 145.

115. Witos to Dąbski, rec. 12 Oct. 1920, quoted in Opel' and Ioffe to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/40–41.

116. Chicherin to Ioffe, 8 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/38.

117. The preceding extraordinary session of the VTsIK had taken place as recently as late September 1920.

118. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 182, 93.

119. The main factor in reaching that decision may have been that, on the Polish side, the preliminaries were to be ratified by the Parliament.

120. It involved just two speakers, Radek and I. M. Vareikis; only the former was a leading Bolshevik.

121. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 186, 97–110. Radek's notion that the preliminary peace was a temporary compromise was confirmed by the mid-October official declaration of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, which stated: "Both sides that have concluded peace at Riga know perfectly well that this peace is neither durable nor true . . . mainly because it has been concluded by governments representing two deadly hostile social classes, the bourgeoisie and workers, one of which must fall, since both of them cannot simultaneously exist in the long run." Thus, the Riga peace "will not delay, but may even accelerate" social revolution in Poland. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 244, 501–502, emphasis in the original.)

122. Piotr Stawecki, "Ratyfikacja umowy preliminaryjnej i traktatu ryskiego przez Sejm Ustawodawczy," in Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski,* 111–115, including the quotations.

Chapter VII. *Definitive Peace Negotiations: Difficulties*

1. As the Polish minister of war put it in late September 1920, "the approaching peace with the Bolsheviks will likely not be very durable, especially if the Bolsheviks have their hands otherwise untied." (*UPD,* vol. 2, 199–204.)

2. Ganetskii to Chicherin, 12 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/64; Ganetskii to Chicherin, 16 Oct. 1920, ibid./65; Ganetskii to Chicherin, 19 Oct. 1920, ibid./67; Ganetskii to Chicherin, 22 Oct. 1920, ibid./71; Article II of the preliminaries, *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 236, 468. Karpus is egregiously mistaken in suggesting that the Poles violated the terms of armistice by giving material assistance to Petliura's troops immediately after the signing. (Zbigniew Karpus, "Formowanie oddziałów ukraińskich w Polsce w latach 1919–1920," in Zbigniew Karpus et al., eds., *Polska i Ukraina: Sojusz 1920 roku i jego następstwa,* Toruń: UMK, 1997, 244.)

3. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 212, 409–410; *UPD,* vol. 2, 199–204.

4. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 235, 463–464; Article II of the preliminaries, ibid., doc. 236, 468.

5. Legieć estimates that during that period they received, among other things, 10,000 rifles, 150 machine guns, 20 artillery pieces, and 8 armored cars. (Jacek Legieć, *Armia Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej w wojnie polsko-ukraińsko-bolszewickiej w 1920 r.,* Toruń:

A. Marszałek, 2002, 187–188.) In light of the data gathered by Karpus, however, Legieć's estimate appears to be rather inflated. (Karpus, "Formowanie oddziałów ukraińskich w Polsce," 244.) In any case, the Poles apparently did their best, as Soviet intelligence indicates they helped Petliura and their other allies "with all means at their disposal." (Ganetskii to Chicherin, 25 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/77.)

6. The Soviets knew about these Polish efforts at forging a new anti-Bolshevik alliance, as they received intelligence that Piłsudski did "all he could to facilitate agreement between Petliura and Wrangel." (Ganetskii to Chicherin, 7 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/80.)

7. Legieć, *Armia URL,* 179–182. See also *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 229, 459, and doc. 241, 489. The general's name is sometimes spelled as "Permikin."

8. Karpus, "Formowanie oddziałów ukraińskich w Polsce," 243–244.

9. This was done thanks to the Poles who sent several battalions to take positions between Soviet and Ukrainian troops at the front line.

10. Sixteen thousand of whom were effectives. (Legieć, *Armia URL,* 189.)

11. Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku: Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920,* Toruń: UMK, 1999, 36–64.

12. Piłsudski joked about Balakhovich: "Today, he is Russian; tomorrow, Polish; the day after, Belarusian; and the next day, a Negro." (Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk, *Sawinkow,* Warsaw, 1992, 198.)

13. While Balakhovich's men were very good fighters, they were at the same time extremely difficult to control, as they habitually robbed local populations and committed savage anti-Jewish excesses. (Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski,* 86–90.) For a number of Polish reports on these troops, see *SWW,* part 6, docs. 1–12, 121–144. For a colorful description of Balakhovich and his men, see Karol Wędziagolski, *Pamiętniki,* London: PFK, 1972, 436–439.

14. *DiM,* vol. 3, 478 n. 2; Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski,* 91.

15. Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski,* 100–106.

16. Zbigniew Karpus and Waldemar Rezmer, "Powstanie słuckie 1920 r. w świetle polskich materiałów wojskowych," *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne,* 1, 1996, 75–79; Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski,* 166–170. As the Second Department pointed out, "the rising of Slutsk County was the first instance of independent armed struggle by Belarusians for national independence." (Quoted in Oleg Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923,* Białystok: BTH, 1995, 210.)

17. Quoted in Zenon Krajewski, *Geneza i dzieje wewnętrzne Litwy Środkowej 1920–1922,* Lublin: OSPiS PZKS, 1996, 59.

18. Krajewski, *Geneza i dzieje wewnętrzne Litwy Środkowej,* 52–56; Aleksander Srebrakowski, *Sejm Wileński 1922 roku: Idea i jej realizacja,* Wrocław: UW, 1993, 49.

19. Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Ioffe, 25 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/37/6; teleprinter conversation between Chicherin and Lorents, likely 13 Oct. 1920, ibid./40/67–69; Chicherin to Ioffe, 13 Oct. 1920, ibid./41/37–38; Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Oct. 1920, ibid./50; *New York Times,* 13 Oct. 1920, 1.

20. Krestinskii was also a member of both the Politburo and the Orgburo, as well as the secretary of the Central Committee.

21. Chicherin to Ganetskii, 28 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/25/9; Chicherin to Obolenskii, 28 Oct. 1920, ibid./35/40; Obolenskii to Sabanin, 21 Oct. 1920, ibid./41/72; Lenin to Ioffe, 25 Oct. 1920, ibid./37/7; Chicherin to Ioffe, 25 Oct. 1920, ibid./8. As a concession to his sickness, Moscow subsequently offered to let Ioffe stay at "a sanatorium near Riga and commute to Riga 2 or 3 times a week for 2 or 3 hours." Under this arrangement, he would be able "to participate in resolving main issues and directing all work of our delegation," as Chicherin put it. (Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/51.) However, it appears from Chicherin's wire of 13 January 1921 that Ioffe actually remained in Riga. (Ibid./80.) Moreover, the vast quantity of Ioffe's wires and reports to Moscow indicates that he continued to work full time, if not overtime, regardless of his poor health.

22. Incidentally, Kviring was not Ukrainian, but a Volga German. (K. A. Zalesskii, *Imperiia Stalina: Biograficheskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar',* Moscow: Veche, 2000, 214.)

23. Chicherin to Ioffe, rec. 5 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/42–44.

24. Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki 1921: Geneza, rokowania, traktat, komisje mieszane,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, 56; Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 133; Janikowski to Świtalski, 10 Oct. 1920, quoted in Janusz Cisek and Włodzimierz Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach ryskich," in Mieczysław Wojciechowski, ed., *Traktat ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, 78.

25. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 205, 125; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 57; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 129; former co-secretary of the mixed legal-political commission to Prof. Wandycz, 6 July 1965, PCPW; Cisek and Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach ryskich," 84. Kumaniecki refers mistakenly to Stefan Strasburger; Dąbski, on the other hand, misspells his last name as "Strassburger."

26. Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/42; Ioffe to Chicherin, 26 Nov. 1920, ibid./39/17; Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Nov. 1920, ibid./4.

27. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 57.

28. As Vatslav Panskii, the Polish Bolshevik expert with the Soviet peace delegation, put it: "According to the instructions of the BP [Polish Bureau] in Moscow, we do not at all touch upon these matters [i.e., relating to Polish prisoners and hostages in Russia]. It is noticeable that the Polish delegation exerts great pressure to solve these matters as soon as possible." The Poles passed letters for Polish prisoners and hostages in Russia. In return, the Polish Bolsheviks were able to send money to, and exchange letters with, their families in Poland. (RGASPI 63/1/539/1 and 8–9.)

29. This logic, in any case dubious, was denied by reality. For instance, in early 1921, nearly 20 percent of the inmates of the Andron'evskii concentration camp in Moscow were officially listed as "hostages." Many of them were Polish. (GARF 5209/1/5/9.)

30. Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/51. The Tsentrevak's full name was "Central Authority for Evacuation of Prisoners of War and Refugees."

31. The Berlin agreement was signed by Stefan Brodovskii-Bratman on behalf of the Soviet Red Cross and Edward Zalewski on behalf of the Polish Red Cross. (Zbigniew Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War and Internees Kept in Poland in 1918–1924,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2001, 99.)

32. Panskii to the Polish Bureau, 13 Oct. 1920, RGASPI 63/1/539/1; Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Ioffe, 25 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/37/6; Chicherin to Lorents, 15 Oct. 1920,

ibid./41/62; Birnbaum to the High Command, rec. 22 Oct. 1920, AGND 5140/T1, 3; Art. VII of the preliminaries, *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 236, 469; Panskii to the Polish Bureau, 16 Oct. 1920, RGASPI 63/1/539/2–3. Chicherin's wire to Ganetskii of 19 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/13, confirms that "as a rule, Polish Communists do not want to come over here."

33. AAN, MSZ/12674, 194–200.

34. The first Soviet claim was false, while the second was essentially not incorrect, as Petliura's troops had stopped fighting on the night of 18–19 October, and were at the time preparing for resumption of hostilities. Note that Article II of the preliminaries allowed support of "third party hostilities against the other side" until the exchange of ratification documents, which took place on 2 November. (See above, "The Final Defeat of Poland's Ukrainian and Belarusian Allies.")

35. This demand was premature, since the preliminary peace stipulated that Polish troops were to withdraw behind the new border "after" the exchange of ratification documents, which took place only on 2 November; see below.

36. Both of these claims were false. Żeligowski's troops were operating in the immediate Wilno region, recognized by the Soviets as Lithuanian in the peace treaty of July 1920, and lying to the west of "the Polish corridor." Balakhovich's forces, on the other hand, were at the time in southern Belarus, over two hundred kilometers from the corridor. (See above, "The Final Defeat of Poland's Ukrainian and Belarusian Allies" and Chapter VI, "General Żeligowski's Capture of Wilno.")

37. *DiM,* vol. 3, docs. 247 and 248, 507–511. See also *PSV,* vol. 2, docs. 187 and 188, 111–112.

38. Obolenskii to Chicherin, cc: Ioffe, 25 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/37/6.

39. Already a day before the exchange, Trotsky and Rakovskii wired Moscow that "because the issue of Petliura may acquire great importance in our relations with Poland, it is necessary to unfold the most extensive agitation against Poland's dishonest behavior, breaching its peace obligations." The proposed means of "systematic agitation" would include "newspaper articles, unceasing radio reports," "political manifestations," and others. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 190, 115–116; emphasis in the original.)

40. Chicherin accused the Poles of "a glaring breach," even though he admitted that "the treaty's great defect is the absence of a date for Polish withdrawal to the border line after the exchange of ratification documents." Apparently, he did not see that these two statements contradicted each other. (Chicherin to Ioffe, 4 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/44.) "Diplomatic demonstration": Chicherin to Obolenskii, 1 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/79.

41. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin and Krestinskii, 6 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/53; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Nov. 1920, ibid./55; Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Nov. 1920, ibid./35/42–44; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 192, 117.

42. Chicherin to Ioffe, 14 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/47.

43. Ioffe reported to Chicherin that "the issue was brought up very sharply, including a threat of renewal of war in case of continuation of breaching the treaty." The Poles, however, "categorically rejected the reproach of breaching the treaty." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/39/4.)

44. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 250, 513–519. Indeed, as late as the end of December 1920, the Soviets were still working on creating "the Polish Worker-Peasant Red Army in Moscow." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 219, 154–155 and 93 n. 1 [quotation].)

45. *DiM,* vol. 3, docs. 252 and 251, respectively, 519–520. See also Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Sklianskii, 14 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/58.

46. Łatyszonek, *Białoruskie formacje wojskowe,* 200; *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 256, 529.

47. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 198, 120–121.

48. Chicherin to Ioffe, undated, AVPRF 4/32/36/85. See also Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Dec. 1920, ibid./79.

49. No relation to Jan H. Hempel, the well-known Polish Communist. (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny,* Cracow: PAU, 1935– , vol. 9, 380–382.)

50. Ioffe to Chicherin, Trotsky, and Sklianskii, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/84. To mitigate the withdrawal of the demand, Moscow decided that the PRUVSK be placed in a remote manor house surrounded "by barbed wire." This time it was not only the Poles but also Iordanskii who protested against this decision, pointing out that, according to a previous special agreement, the PRUVSK was to reside at Minsk and to enjoy diplomatic immunity and freedom of movement. Chicherin initially disagreed with Iordanskii, insisting that "the designation of the city does not at all mean that a hostile delegation can go wherever they want within the whole city." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 8 Dec. 1920, ibid./86.) He only gave in to Ioffe's assertion that "Iordanskii is right and one cannot keep the commission under arrest. One needs to act decently; surveillance may be established but not in such a way as to make the impression of arrest." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 10 Dec. 1920, ibid./92.)

51. Ioffe to Chicherin, 22 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/64; Chicherin to Ganetskii, 28 Nov. 1920, ibid./25/9/8; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 205, 127.

52. Apparently, the idea of demanding a deadline was first suggested to the Polish government by the chief of the General Staff, Gen. Rozwadowski. He meant it as a tit for tat for the previous Soviet deadline for the signing of the preliminaries. (Rozwadowski to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, 19 Nov. 1920, AGND 5184/T1.)

53. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 258, 532–533. The Polish mission had been arrested by the Soviets in late April 1920.

54. Dąbski to Sapieha, after 25 Nov. 1920, quoted in Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 133–136.

55. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 259, 534–535. The note was also signed by Rakovskii, in his nominal capacity as Soviet Ukraine's commissar of foreign affairs. It was drafted by Chicherin who then consulted over it with Ioffe. The latter proposed some fairly significant changes, virtually all of which were in fact accepted. (Ioffe to Chicherin and Rakovskii, 29 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/81.)

56. Polish military circles also considered war to be all but unavoidable. For example, the Third Department of the General Staff observed around 1 December 1920 that the Bolsheviks' "attitude to the Riga negotiations has become more impudent and arrogant; right from the start, they began to blackmail us, cleverly juggling with the notions 'peace—war.' Having concluded the armistice without guarantees, our delegation finds itself at times in a rather difficult situation. . . . The Soviets face the alternative: (a) peace and transition to internal work; this alternative seems presently improbable . . . (b) hence, what remains is war." (AGND 6768/T1, 1–2; emphasis in the original.)

57. Ioffe to Chicherin, 23 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/64; Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Nov. 1920, ibid./66 and 71–74.

58. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 206, 131. Chicherin himself was less enthusiastic on that score, as he argued: "At the moment of the conclusion of the preliminaries we insisted on a

long denunciation notice period because then it was necessary for us to be protected on the Western Front. Presently, our military situation is completely different. At the same time, the Poles cannot even think about attacking us during the winter. If they have any aggressive intentions at all, the latter can be timed no sooner than with the spring. During the winter, extension of the armistice denunciation notice period has no real significance and is called for by nothing of importance." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/51.)

59. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 201, 122; Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/51.

60. Chicherin to Ganetskii, 19 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/13. Chicherin likewise instructed Ioffe that "one needs to treat very seriously all possibilities of winning over Polish leading circles through economic rapprochement." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Nov. 1920, ibid./32/35/42–44.) More generally, he pointed out: "We have on our hands an effective means of pressure—the possibility to be more or less accommodating toward various governments in regard to economic issues." (Chicherin to Ganetskii, 21 Oct. 1920, ibid./25/9/28–31.)

61. Ganetskii to Chicherin, 28 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/8/21; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 206, 131. In another wire to Ioffe, Chicherin presented his reservations at greater length: "As for immediate conclusion of commercial transactions with Poland, there prevails some skepticism here, because we can give Poland very little. Here, they fear one will get the opposite result. Talking about commercial transactions we will raise Poland's hopes, and then it will turn out that we can give them next to nothing, and that the commercial transactions are so miserable they are not worth talking about. The disillusion caused in this way will only bring harm rather than benefit." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/51.)

62. This was an astonishing offer, considering that much of the Soviet state was ravaged at the time by severe food shortages and even starvation. In any case, in view of Chicherin's warning to avoid "premature commercial transactions," Ioffe hardly had a mandate to make such offers.

63. At the same time, the Polish press, as Ioffe put it, "abuses Dąbski, declaring that he is not fit to hold a candle to me and will not be able to get the better of me; therefore, others are being sent who will be able to fight with me more effectively." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 209, 136.)

64. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 133–134, 136, and 137–141.

65. *PSV,* vol. 2, docs. 209 and 212, 136 and 142–146; Ioffe to Chicherin, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/82; Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 30 Nov. 1920, ibid./36/76.

66. Ioffe to Chicherin, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/41/82. Ioffe's idea of releasing Filipowicz was supported by Ganetskii as the Soviet representative in Latvia, and by Leshchinskii, an influential expert with the Soviet peace delegation. (P. N. Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii mir,* Moscow, 1969, 172 n. 68.)

67. During the release, as Ioffe reported to Moscow, certain "misunderstandings, usual with us though totally unnecessary, were not avoided. . . . After I informed Dąbski that Filipowicz was free, in full accordance with my plan about which I had told you beforehand, mentioning that this was being done as a personal favor to him, there comes a wire from Iakubovich [of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID)] to demand two Polish Communists in return for Filipowicz. At the beginning, it could still have been done, but after my aforementioned letter to Dąbski it was obviously impossible. Not to mention that, once Filipowicz is in Riga, we cannot demand anything at all in return for him. At the railroad station there was also an awkward situation: the Poles came to greet Filipowicz, yet the courier who brought

him declared he would not let him go because he had received instructions from the NKID to deliver him to Comrade Ioffe. Are there still any employees at the NKID who do not know that Riga is no longer within Russia and who do not understand that any witness to this scene could call a policeman, asking him to arrest a Russian citizen who permits himself to deprive of freedom another, and not even Russian, citizen?" (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 215, 148.)

68. Chicherin to Ganetskii, 21 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/28–31. A week earlier, Chicherin wrote in the same vein: "General situation is distinguished by extreme vagueness. We don't know, among other things, to what extent the peace signed by Poland coincides with the policy of France, and to what extent it was forced by the internal situation and pacifist demands within Poland itself." (Chicherin to Ganetskii, 14 Oct. 1920, ibid./33.)

69. Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/42–44; Zenonas Butkus, "Deiatel'nost' pervogo sovetskogo posla v Litve A. E. Aksel'roda, sentiabr' 1920–mart 1921 g.," in A. O. Chubar'ian et al., eds., *Rossiia i Baltiia: Narody i strany, vtoraia polovina XIX—30-e gg. XX v.,* Moscow: RAN IVI, 2000, 119; Chicherin to Ganetskii, 14 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/33.

70. More precisely, he was to be paid "an equivalent of 150,000 dollars per week for the first month"! This was an astronomical amount, given that the dollar's buying power in 1920 was probably about a hundred times greater than today, considering inflation. The money was to be paid by Victor Kopp, the Soviet trade representative in Berlin, who was also to receive "Polish information" from Orlov. (Opel' and Ioffe to Chicherin, 7 Oct. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/37.) For comparison, the budget of Soviet Military Intelligence (Razvedupra) for 1921 was £481,726 sterling, or roughly $2.4 million dollars at $5 = £1. (Politburo session of 1 Dec. 1921, RGASPI 17/3/239, one of the attachments.)

71. Chicherin to Ioffe, 28 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/52–54; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 211, 141. He likewise complained to Ganetskii: "Our intelligence from Poland itself is so contradictory that it is difficult to build anything on it." (Chicherin to Ganetskii, 8 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/1–3.)

72. Ioffe to Chicherin, Lenin, Trotsky, and Krestinskii, likely 6 Nov. (the original dated 6 October in error), AVPRF 4/32/36/33; Ioffe to Chicherin, 6 Nov. 1920, ibid./56; Chicherin: *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 194, 118.

73. The proposed international peacekeeping forces were to count fifteen hundred troops and include contingents from France, Britain, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden. (Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski,* London: Gryf, 1985, vol. 2, 574.)

74. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/82; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 209, 134–135.

75. Chicherin to Ganetskii, 8 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/1–3. Chicherin explained Moscow's motives to Ioffe at some length: "Only now have we decided to issue a note on Żeligowski because precisely now the question of sending a League of Nations contingent to Wilno has become realistic. . . . Earlier we did not broach this question also because we did not want to distract the attention from the question of Petliura and Balakhovich. We concentrated all our attention and efforts on them. Now, after the liquidation of Petliura and Balakhovich, we can shift attention to Żeligowski without any detriment." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/66.)

76. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 260, 536–537.

77. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 261, 537–538.

78. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 262, 538–540.

79. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/82. Right from the start, the Lithuanian government tried to kill the idea of a plebiscite in the Wilno region, even though it found it impolitic to oppose it openly. As Butkus reveals, Kaunas asked Moscow through Aksel'rod to make a protest against the League of Nations' decision to send international troops to Wilno. "This protest was supposed to help Lithuania avoid the plebiscite altogether," he maintains. Yet, Chicherin rejected the Lithuanian draft of the proposed note. (Butkus, "Deiatel'nost' pervogo sovetskogo posla v Litve," 120–121.) In the end, Moscow's note of 11 December resulted mainly from Soviet concerns.

80. Or perhaps "two weeks earlier," as he argued in another message to Moscow. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 164.)

81. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 215, 150–151, emphasis in the original; doc. 209, 134; doc. 212, 143–144; and doc. 205, 126.

82. Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 30 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/76; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 207, 132. Ioffe illustrated his point by quoting the Warsaw correspondent of the *Morning Post* who had reported on 21 November that the recent concentration of fifteen Red Army divisions near Smolensk, Ioffe's latest declaration at Riga that the Poles were breaching the treaty, and "the continued anti-Polish campaign in the Soviet official press, make Polish circles fear that a new Bolshevik invasion of Poland is possible this winter and that all the benefits of the Riga peace will disappear even earlier than could have been expected." (Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 30 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/76.)

83. Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/79.

84. Chicherin advised Ioffe in late December that copies of his reports to Lenin had been made available to the members of the Central Committee and he asked him to present his point of view in a concise memorandum, since they "don't have time to read long documents." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 19 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/67.)

85. *PSV,* vol. 2, docs. 195 and 196, 118–119.

86. Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/100; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 152. According to Ioffe, the Poles first determined their revised share of gold as 232 million rubles and then corrected it to 236 million. (Ibid.) See also Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Dec. 1920, ibid./35/64, where he talks of 233 million.

87. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 146 and 151; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 215, 149.

88. Ioffe to Chicherin, 25 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/120.

89. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 229, 173, and doc. 238, 188.

90. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 142 and 151–152; Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/98–100; Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim: Stosunki polsko-radzieckie, 1921–1923,* Warsaw: KiW, 1971, 69.

91. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 162.

92. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 163, and doc. 226, 170. Moreover, Moscow maintained that political archives should not be returned either, since they had already been turned over to the Polish Communists resident in Soviet Russia. (Ibid., doc. 222, 164.) The phrase "education and culture" is a loose translation of the Russian term "prosveshchenie."

93. The Poles wanted to acquire the important villages of Radoszkowicze and Baturyn; moreover, they argued that they needed the eastern bank of the river Wilja, so that

floating of timber would not cause any quarrels. (Ioffe to Chicherin, 3 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/135.)

94. According to Dąbski, Ioffe variously estimated the territory at 10,000 and 12,000 square versts (11,200 and 13,500 square kilometers). (Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 143 and 150.)

95. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 150 and 152–153.

96. *PSV,* vol. 2, docs. 199, 202, and 203, 121, 123–124; Politburo session of 24 Nov. 1920, RGASPI 17/3/124; Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/70.

97. The Politburo had decided to arrest the bishop in early September 1920. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 145, 13.)

98. Ioffe and Leshchinskii to Chicherin, cc: Lenin and Dzerzhinskii, 2 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/77.

99. Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/91; Ioffe to Chicherin, 21 Dec. 1920, ibid./108.

100. Chicherin to Ioffe, 21 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/68; Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Dec. 1920, ibid./66; Ioffe to Chicherin, 24 Dec. 1920, ibid./36/110. Ioffe admitted, however, that there may have been some contradiction between the preceding peace treaties and "our internal practice." For instance, optants had a right to liquidate their property if they wanted to leave Russia, but this right could not be exercised in practice. As Ioffe put it: "We do recognize a right even to immovable property, but there is a decree banning trade in it. We do have a right to movable property, but there are local by-laws, for example, banning removal of furniture from apartments." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 20 Dec. 1920, ibid./104–105.)

101. Chicherin had difficulty keeping up with the rapidly increasing amount of work. Already in November he warned Ioffe that "in the recent period, the [amount of] work has increased incredibly, [while] incidentally I have not yet received the requested support in the person of a qualified manager. Therefore, I may actually fail to keep an eye on something." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 22 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/50.)

102. Ioffe to Chicherin, 18 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/39/20; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 225, p. 169.

103. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 146.

104. Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/91; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 196, 119.

105. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 157–159. Indeed, as Ioffe put it in another wire to Moscow, "we are actually narrowing the obligations of the preliminaries, interpreting unclear formulations to our advantage but in such a way so that it would be impossible to catch us in nonobservance of the preliminaries." (Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: the Central Committee, 26 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/114.)

106. Ioffe to Chicherin, 21 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/108.

107. Ioffe elaborated on this idea in his wire to the Bolshevik leadership: "If they had told me right at the beginning they didn't want any commissions in Moscow, there would be nothing easier than to carry it out. However, after [we have fought for six weeks for the commission in Poland to reside in Warsaw, declaring all the time that Russia will let the parallel commission reside in Moscow, and after all the world press's trumpeting about our preparations for invasion of Poland, and after the mistake with the belated note on Żeligowski], to declare now: 'We will not let you into Moscow,' would mean to announce to the whole world: 'We have simply been throwing dust in your eyes; we are preparing a new war; we are doing what you ought not to see.'" (Ioffe to Chicherin, Lenin, Trotsky, Dzerzhinskii, and Menzhinskii, 19 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/39/23–24.)

108. As Ioffe put it in his wire to the Bolshevik leadership: "However impotent our organs of security, I cannot imagine that in Moscow, the Center of Russia, they would be unable, having thousands of opportunities, to put the 30 hapless Pollacks under such conditions that the latter would not threaten the security of the Republic." (Ioffe to Chicherin, Lenin, Trotsky, Dzerzhinskii, and Menzhinskii, 19 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/39/23–24.)

109. Ioffe to Chicherin, 18 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/39/20; Ioffe to Chicherin, 18 Dec. 1920, ibid./21; Ioffe to Chicherin, Lenin, Trotsky, Dzerzhinskii, and Menzhinskii, 19 Dec. 1920, ibid./23–24.

110. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 164.

111. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 155–156.

112. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski* 148. According to Ioffe's report to Moscow, Dąbski warned him that "on no account can he allow any minimizing of the preliminaries and that, if such a striving by our side became obvious, he would leave; 'in this case, let someone else, rather than me, sign the treaty,'" the Pole insisted. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 162.)

113. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: the Central Committee, 26 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/114; Ioffe to Chicherin, 19 Dec. 1920, ibid./39/19.

114. Ioffe to Chicherin, 29 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/126; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 222, 165.

115. According to the former Polish co-secretary of the mixed legal-political commission, Leshchinskii "was the only man [within the Soviet delegation] besides Ioffe, who had tangible influence over the political line and tactics of the delegation. . . . His position within the Party hierarchy was higher than that of Ioffe and for that reason he played a fairly significant role as 'éminence grise' . . . and the Communist Party's 'eye.'" (Former co-secretary to Prof. Wandycz, 6 July 1965, PCPW.)

116. The Bolsheviks believed that the issue of "peace or war with Poland is a detail of [the larger issue of] peace and war with the Entente," as Leshchinskii put it. From that point of view, peace with Poland was seen as "separatist."

117. Leshchinskii, "Theses on the Tactics of Peace Negotiations," part I: "Problems of War and Peace," 29 Dec. 1920, RGASPI 17/86/214/27–30; emphasis in the original. The editor of *PSV* omitted this particular part of the theses, ostensibly because it "relates to the political situation in Poland." (*PSV,* vol. 2, 168.)

118. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 224, 167–168.

119. Ioffe to Chicherin, 30 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/127; Ioffe to Chicherin, 27 Dec. 1920, ibid./116 and 119.

120. Chicherin to Ioffe, 31 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/128.

Chapter VIII. *Definitive Peace Negotiations: Crisis and Breakthrough*

1. Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/59; Chicherin to Ioffe, 5 Dec. 1920, ibid./80; Chicherin to Ioffe, 26 Dec. 1920, ibid./112.

2. Ioffe to Chicherin, 27 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/117.

3. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 6 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/82; Ioffe to Chicherin, 29 Dec. 1920, ibid./127; Chicherin to Ioffe, 6 Jan. 1921, ibid./149.

4. Ioffe to Chicherin, 10 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/160; Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Jan. 1921, ibid./162; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Jan. 1921, ibid./159.

5. Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/94.

6. Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/94; Ioffe to Chicherin, 13 Dec. 1920, ibid./100. Soviet Belarus included at the time only five counties of Minsk Province.

7. Chicherin to Ioffe, 29 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/73; Chicherin to Ioffe, 6 Jan. 1920, ibid./75–77; *DVP,* vol. 3, doc. 264, 475–477.

8. The Poles financed them until the signing of the definitive peace treaty. (Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku: Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920,* Toruń: UMK, 1999, 170–171.)

9. Chicherin to Ioffe, 22 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/85; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 221, 156; Ioffe to Chicherin, 8 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/25; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Jan. 1921, ibid./36/159.

10. Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/160.

11. Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/160; Ioffe to Chicherin, 10 Jan. 1921, ibid./161.

12. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 210, 140; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Jan. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/159.

13. This forecast was made by the Soviet Red Cross representative in Poland in regard to the Strzałków camp. (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 210, 139.) It seems exaggerated in regard to either Strzałków or Tuchola. According to archival data, a total of 5,351 Soviet POWs died in the former and 1,867 in the latter. For comparison, 14,624 Soviet POWs were kept in the former and 6,960 in the latter as of late December 1920. (Zbigniew Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918–1924,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 1997, 108–109 and 114; Zbigniew Karpus and Waldemar Rezmer, *Tuchola: Obóz jeńców i internowanych, 1914–1923,* Toruń: UMK, 1997, vol. 1, xliii and xlvii; see also Zbigniew Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War and Internees Kept in Poland in 1918–1924,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 2001, 105 and 129.)

14. *DVP,* vol. 3, doc. 256, 464–467; AAN MSZ/12673, 11–13, see also 7–8, 13–15, and 19–20.

15. Col. Habicht, M.D., to the High Command, 13 Jan. 1921, AAN, MSZ/12673, 10.

16. AAN, MSZ/12673, 21–22. The Soviet Red Cross began its activity in Poland on the basis of the Berlin agreement of 6 September 1920, which was observed by the Poles. The Soviets, by contrast, refused to implement this agreement domestically (see Chapter VII, "Mutual Accusations").

17. Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War,* 127–128. These or similar numbers have been accepted by I. S. Ivanov et al., *Ocherki istorii Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del Rossii,* Moscow: Olma, 2002, vol. 2, 52; G. F. Matveev in the introduction to *KvPP,* 14; and B. V. Sokolov, "Liudskie poteri Rossii i SSSR v voinakh, vooruzhennykh konfliktakh i inykh demograficheskikh katastrofakh XX v.," in B. V. Sokolov, *Pravda o Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine: Sbornik statei,* St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1998, 277.

Most Russian historians, however, accept Chicherin's claim that as many as 60,000 Bolsheviks died in Polish POW camps, even though he failed to support it with any evidence. (*DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 210, 319.) Note that his claim is either rejected or contradicted by the only two Russian works based on relevant archival data. Matveev argues that Chicherin's number cannot possibly be true. (*KvPP,* 14–16.) Chicherin's number is contradicted by G. F. Krivosheev et al., eds., *Grif sekretnosti sniat: Poteri Vooruzhonnykh Sil SSSR v voinakh, boevykh deistviiakh i voennykh konfliktakh,* Moscow: VI, 1993. According to this book, the total number of all Red Army soldiers missing in action or taken prisoner on all fronts during 1919 and

1920 was 160,000. The number of those who returned after the war from captivity in Poland and internment in Germany was 117,000. It is thus obvious that the total number of POWs who perished on *all* fronts cannot exceed 43,000. (Ibid., 30 and 34; my emphasis.)

18. According to Polish archival data, 46,400 Polish soldiers were taken prisoner by the Soviets. 20,000 of them did not return. (*ZZD,* viii.) Some of them may have joined the Red Army; however, the overwhelming majority of the 20,000 most likely perished in captivity.

19. According to Karpus, the total number of Bolshevik POWs in Poland was 110,000; Mel'tiukhov maintains the number was 146,000, and Sokolov gives it as 130,000. (Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War,* 62; Mikhail I. Mel'tiukhov, *Sovetsko-pol'skie voiny: Voenno-politicheskoe protivostoianie 1918–1939 gg.,* Moscow: Veche, 2001, 104; Sokolov, "Liudskie poteri Rossii i SSSR," 277.) The number of Polish POWs appears to have been 46,400. (*ZZD,* viii.)

20. At least until February 1921, when Moscow decided "immediately to return all Polish POWs from work on the Murmansk railroad"; to improve Polish POWs' food and ease their lack of clothing; to take care of their sick and wounded; and actually to pay those of them who were used as forced labor in industry. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 264, 548.) Whether this decision was implemented is not clear, however. According to Kumaniecki, Polish POWs remained in the Murmansk region. (Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki 1921: Geneza, rokowania, traktat, komisje mieszane,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, 130 n. 1.)

21. As Markhlevskii complained to the Bolshevik Central Committee, "in the Donbass, they treated [Polish] POWs scandalously (Comrade Feliks Kon had to intervene against the cruelties to which they were subjected)." (13 May 1921, RGASPI 17/86/210/53.)

22. Karpus and Rezmer, *Tuchola: Obóz jeńców,* vol. 1, xxxvii–xxxviii; Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War,* 112. Nonetheless, there were individual cases where POWs refused to work. (Bogna Wojciechowska, *Bolszewicy pod Strzałkowem: Rzecz o obozie jeńców i internowanych z czasów wojny polsko-bolszewickiej 1920 roku,* Poznań: B. Wojciechowska, 2001, 105.)

23. For example, as Ioffe put it, "thanks to the efforts of Sempołowska, it was possible to secure improvements in the [Strzałków] camp, and the administration was removed. . . . After Sempołowska's intervention and at her expense, electricity was installed [in the barrack for Communist POWs]. Thanks to the efforts of Sempołowska, it was possible to secure the right for the Communists to use the camp library." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 210, 139–140.) For a comprehensive account of the improvements, see Wojciechowska, *Bolszewicy pod Strzałkowem,* 87–88. Sempołowska was granted permission to enter all POW camps on 2 November 1920; prior to that she was able to visit only some of them. (Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War,* 99 n. 4.)

24. According to *PSV,* vol. 2, 141 n. 1, Polish POWs were kept in thirty-nine camps as of 1 December 1920. According to Kumaniecki, Polish POWs were repatriated in 1921 from as many as forty-seven regions or localities; the number of camps may have been even larger. By contrast, in Poland there were only six POW camps in late 1920. (Karpus, *Russian and Ukrainian Prisoners of War,* 103.)

25. Markhlevskii to the Bolshevik Central Committee, 13 May 1921, RGASPI 17/86/210/53.

26. For instance, a Soviet representative in Latvia described the first group of Latvian POWs, returning from Russia in late December 1920 as follows: "All of them badly clothed,

many in torn bast shoes and even without greatcoats. . . . Until the moment of departure, the Latvian POWs were forced to work, in breach of the treaty. They were given half a pound of bread a day for 8 people [*sic*]; they were harshly punished, even beaten, for the slightest fault. They were also victimized for turning to the Latvian representatives; the Cheka took two Latvian POWs off the transport for unknown reasons. . . . Such and other similar actions of our organs just give abundant material for the press campaign against Russia." (Pel'she to Radek, cc: Ganetskii, 23 Dec. 1920, RGASPI 325/2/27/117.)

27. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 227, 170–171.

28. For instance, Ioffe reported to Moscow on 5 January 1921 that the Latvian diplomat, Albat, had pointed out to him "the extraordinary increase in all kinds of rumors about our aggressiveness in relation to Latvia, and especially about our preparation of a coup d'état on the Azerbaijani model." (AVPRF 4/32/36/140.) Earlier, he reported: "There circulate rumors from Polish-French sources that, on the 24th, two of our regiments made a raid on Latgalia. Here, such rumors get very much on diplomats' nerves." (Ioffe to Chicherin, 29 Dec. 1920, ibid./127.)

29. Chicherin to Ioffe, rec. 3 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/74.

30. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 175–177.

31. Jan Dąbski, *Pokój ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy,* Warsaw, 1931, 160; quotations from Matuszewski in Janusz Cisek and Włodzimierz Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach ryskich," in Mieczysław Wojciechowski, ed., *Traktat ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, 83. Dąbski's assessment may have had something to do with the conference of members of the former Russian Constituent Assembly that took place in Paris in early January 1921. The conference acclaimed a resolution calling for the revision of the Soviet-Polish border as drawn by the preliminary peace. (P. N. Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii mir,* Moscow: Nauka, 1969, 185.)

32. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 177; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 161. It was Iordanskii who insisted on the transfer of the mixed armistice commission to Novozybkov. His goal was to remove its Polish members from Minsk, "the center of the anti-Soviet Belarusian movement." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 236, 185.) Ioffe advised Moscow to threaten the Poles with a unilateral recall of its representatives in the commission, if they did not comply with its demand; thus, he was not very consistent in his proclaimed desire to proceed "with particular caution." (Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Trotsky, 17 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/174.)

33. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 163–164.

34. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 174–175.

35. Chicherin to Ioffe, 19 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/83.

36. This can be inferred from the fact that as late as 7 January 1921, the Central Committee was still unable "to determine the maximum amount" the Soviets would be willing to pay, for lack of suitable materials on which to base the decision. (*PSV,* vol. 2, 179 n. 1.)

37. Ioffe to Chicherin, 31 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/131.

38. Ioffe to Chicherin, 3 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/135; Chicherin to Ioffe, 6 Jan. 1921, ibid./35/75–77.

39. Ioffe to Chicherin, 3 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/135; Chicherin to Ioffe, 6 Jan. 1921, ibid./35/75–77.

40. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 159.

41. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 158–159; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 178–179.

42. Ioffe to Chicherin, 31 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/131; Chicherin to Ioffe, 28 Dec. 1920, ibid./118.

43. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 175; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 173; Ioffe to Chicherin, 31 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/131.

44. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 159–160.

45. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 230, 175–176.

46. Chicherin to Ioffe, 19 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/83.

47. Chicherin to Ioffe, 13 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/78–79.

48. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: the Central Committee and Karakhan, 18 January 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/174; Ioffe to Moscow, 5 Feb. 1921, ibid./197.

49. Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/186; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Feb. 1921, ibid./200; Chicherin to Ioffe, 26 Jan. 1921, ibid./185; Chicherin to Ioffe, 26 Jan. 1921, ibid./35/85.

50. Ioffe to Chicherin, Lenin, and Krestinskii, 25 Jan. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/179. Ioffe reminded Moscow that he had been asked the same question in the summer of 1920 by "a British journalist on behalf of Tallents," the British representative in Riga. That was why he thought Rosenbaum's question was inspired by Britain, which "does not want isolated political negotiations with us, but looks for a reason to conduct such negotiations jointly with other bourgeois states." (Ibid.)

51. Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/187.

52. Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/186.

53. The note stated that the Soviet-Polish preliminary peace treaty in no way invalidated the preceding Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty. Consequently, "sovereign authority in the city and region of Wilno belongs to Lithuania." The note asked Kaunas to make every effort to prevent "the so-called League of Nations" from sending "international troops" there. (*DVP,* vol. 3, doc. 279, 496–497.)

54. Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/192; Chicherin to Ioffe, 1 Feb. 1921, ibid./191; Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 Feb. 1921, ibid./35/89–91; Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 Feb. 1921, ibid./36/192.

55. Ioffe to Chicherin, 5 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/197.

56. Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/198–199; see also Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 Feb. 1921, ibid./200.

57. Chicherin to Ioffe, 12 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/206–207.

58. Ioffe to Chicherin, 11 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/210.

59. Chicherin to Ioffe, 19 Feb. 1921, RGASPI 5/1/2000/74.

60. Ioffe to Chicherin, 26 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/241.

61. For instance, during his speech to the Moscow Soviet on 28 February 1921, Lenin declared: "The peace hasn't yet been signed, but I can say that we have reason to be very optimistic in this regard, that the peace will be signed shortly." (*PSS,* vol. 42, 355.)

62. Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/110–112.

63. Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/188.

64. According to Dąbski's memoirs, he argued then that the tax-generated portion of the gold reserves amounted to 629 million. Yet, according to Ioffe's reports to Moscow, the Poles had calculated this portion in early January at 437 million. (See above, "The Gold

Reserves Issue: Continued Stalemate.") It is out of the question that a couple of weeks later Dąbski would suddenly revise this number upward by 50 percent.

65. Strictly speaking, Ioffe was incorrect, since 10 percent of 307 million is 30.7 million, which rounds off to 31 million. Apparently, Dąbski failed to notice this discrepancy.

66. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 163; Ioffe to Chicherin, 9 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/26.

67. Cisek and Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach," 83–84; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 157, 160, and 164.

68. Ioffe to Chicherin, 25 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/73–76.

69. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 211, 141; Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/101; Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Dec. 1920, ibid./35/66; Ioffe to Chicherin, 5 Feb. 1921, ibid./36/197.

70. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 164; Chicherin to Ioffe, 13 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/80.

71. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 164.

72. According to Ioffe's report to Chicherin of 25 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/73–76, and his report to Chicherin, Lenin, et al. of 31 Jan. 1921, *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 189. Dąbski does not give the dates of the meetings.

73. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 164; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 187; Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/188.

74. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 187. According to Dąbski, "Ioffe repeated the same arguments ten times over." (Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 166.)

75. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 189; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 165–166.

76. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 166–167; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 189.

77. Ioffe to Moscow, 5 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/139.

78. By extension, projects that required cooperation of two or more branches of the same department faced similar difficulties, when the head was not involved. For example, Chicherin informed Ganetskii: "As for the delay with the railroad convention and the experts, you simply cannot imagine what battle we had to do to move the Commissariat of Transport and Communications (*Narkomput'*) from a standstill. Trotsky . . . has recently been absent, and in the *Narkomput'* everything got tangled in the conflict between its two branches. Because of that conflict, it was impossible to get anything done." (Chicherin to Ganetskii, 24 Nov. 1920, AVPRF 4/25/9/11.)

79. The Cheka's Special Department screened experts. As a consequence, quite a few experts were "held up," which "sometimes leads to tragic results," as Chicherin put it. (Chicherin to Ioffe, 8 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/59–61.)

80. Chicherin to Ioffe, 17 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/81–82; Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 Feb. 1921, ibid./88; Chicherin to Ioffe, 23 Jan. 1921, ibid./83; *PTsK,* vol. 1, 86; see also *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 234, 182–184, and doc. 237, 185–186.

81. Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/89–91. See also *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 234, 182–184.

82. Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/89–91.

83. Chicherin to Ioffe, 17 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/96–98; Chicherin to Ioffe, 20 Feb. 1921, ibid./99–100; Chicherin to Ioffe, 16 Feb. 1921, ibid./36/220; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 240, 190–191. In the end, Voikov was the only Moscow specialist who made the trip to Riga.

84. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 168–169 and 172; Ioffe and Malevinskii to Chicherin, 25 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/36/120; Piotr Wojkow, "1921–1923: Dwa lata prac delegacji

rosyjsko-ukraińskiej [do] Rosyjsko-Ukraińsko-Polskich Komisji Mieszanych Reewakuacyjnej i Specjalnej nad wykonaniem Ryskiego Traktatu Pokojowego: Sprawozdanie," in Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Tajny raport Wojkowa, czyli radziecka taktyka zwrotu polskiego mienia gospodarczego i kulturalnego po pokoju ryskim,* Warsaw: Gryf, 1991, 128–129.

85. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 242, 197 (the date on p. 192 in error—see 199); Ioffe to Chicherin, 9 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/26; Chicherin to Ioffe, 14 Feb. 1921, ibid./35/94–95.

86. Ioffe to Chicherin, 9 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/26.

87. Ioffe to Chicherin, 25 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/73–76.

88. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 168–174 (all quotations from Dąbski in this and the two preceding paragraphs).

89. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 186–189 (the date on p. 186 in error—see 189), emphasis in the original.

90. Cisek and Suleja, "Ignacy Matuszewski w rokowaniach," 83–84.

91. Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/88; Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 Feb. 1921, ibid./86; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 175.

92. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 179; Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 12 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/208.

93. Chicherin to Ioffe, 27 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/188; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 173 and 179; see also Chicherin to Ioffe, 17 Feb. 1921, AVPRF, ibid./35/96–98, on the Moscow negotiations with the Germans.

94. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 12 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/208.

95. A group within the Polish delegation representing industrialists was initially opposed to such a confidential meeting, and agreed to it only on 10 February. (*ONGR,* doc. 122, 289; the editors erroneously titled the document as describing the position of "Latvia's industrial circles" on the negotiations.)

96. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 176–177; Ioffe to Chicherin, 19 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/225.

97. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 177–179.

98. Chicherin to Ioffe, 14 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/94–95.

99. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 241, 191–192; Chicherin to Ioffe, 17 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/96–98; Chicherin to Ioffe, 20 Feb. 1921, ibid./99–100.

100. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 242, 192–199.

101. Soviet draft of the scheme, 21 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/38/56–60.

102. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 242, 192–199.

103. Chicherin to Ioffe, 25 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/227–228; Chicherin to Ioffe, 28 Feb. 1921, ibid./35/105; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 245, 203–204 (the published document contains two errors: [1] the correct date should be 23 February; [2] "ne tol'ko" on p. 203 should be replaced by "nastol'ko," see AVPRF 4/32/36/246).

104. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 243, 199–202. The Polish-French alliance was signed on 19 February 1921, while a Polish-Romanian understanding was obvious in late February and led to a formal agreement, signed on 3 March 1921.

105. Including the first batch of gold, worth 21 million, and the advance for the Russian-gauge rolling stock to be bought out and remain in Russia, worth 27 million (and excluding the standard-gauge rolling stock, worth 2 million, to be returned in kind); see below, "The Definitive Peace."

106. Including the 30 million representing the Polish share of Russian gold reserves, and the 29 million representing the total value of Polish rolling stock evacuated to Russia.

107. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 27 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/242–245; Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 2 March 1921, ibid./250; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 246, 204–213; emphasis in the original.

108. Ioffe to Chicherin, cc: Lenin, 27 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/244–245; Chicherin to Ioffe, 1 March 1921, ibid./248; Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 March 1921, ibid./249; Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 March 1921, ibid./35/108–109.

109. Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/260.

110. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 185; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 242, 196.

111. This moral objection has been pointed out by Kumaniecki, though his claim that Warsaw rejected the precious stone scheme on these grounds is in error; see his *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 61.

112. Ioffe to Chicherin, 11 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/271 and 273; Ioffe to Chicherin, 15 March 1921, ibid./281. On the issue of surety, Dąbski was rather disloyal to Steczkowski, as he privately gave Ioffe notice that he would initially make a show of upholding this demand during negotiations, but the Bolshevik should "not get angry," because he would then drop it, at his own risk. (Ibid./273.)

113. Lorents to Chicherin, 24 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/30; *DVP,* vol. 3, doc. 301, 531. In Dąbski's memoirs it says "24 days," which must be a typographical error. (Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 180.)

114. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 178; *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 243, 199.

115. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 267, 551–565, especially clause XXXIV on p. 563.

116. Chicherin to Ioffe, 15 Feb. 1921, RGASPI 5/1/2000/70.

117. Ioffe to Chicherin, 26 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/241; Chicherin to Ioffe, 9 March 1921, ibid./35/113–115; Ioffe to Chicherin, 12 March 1921, ibid./36/270.

118. After Col. Mościcki was killed in 1918, his coffin was placed in the Minsk cathedral, as Poles considered him a hero. In 1921, it was indeed moved to Poland. (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny,* Cracow: PAU, 1935– , vol. 22, 139.)

119. Ioffe to Chicherin, 26 Feb. 1921, no. 1449, AVPRF 4/32/36/241.

120. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 182.

121. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 233, 181; Chicherin to Ioffe, 17 Jan. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/81–82; Chicherin to Ioffe, 15 Jan. 1921, ibid./36/166–167. As Chicherin once observed, "one canvas by Matejko [the Polish painter] may be valued perhaps at a milliard-ruble amount." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 Dec. 1920, AVPRF 4/32/35/56.)

122. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 238, 189; Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 182.

123. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 183–185.

124. Politburo session of 2 Feb. 1921, RGASPI 17/3/128.

125. It appears Ioffe meant not just himself but also his subordinates, as they all worked incredibly long hours, seven days a week. For instance, Ganetskii reported to Chicherin on 6 December 1920: "Krichevskii already collapsed today, due to overwork . . . All the time, I have to work 20 hours a day; often one cannot lie down at all. Naturally, under such conditions, I will soon collapse [as well]." (AVPRF 4/25/8/5–6.)

126. Ioffe to Lenin, cc: Chicherin, 23 Feb. 1921, RGASPI 5/1/2134/30–32.

127. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 244, 203.

128. Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/108; Chicherin to Ioffe, 2 March 1921, ibid./36/249; Chicherin to Ioffe, 3 March 1921, ibid./260; Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 March 1921, ibid./35/110–112.

129. Chicherin to Ioffe, 7 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/110–112; Ganetskii and Leshchinskii to Chicherin, 13 March 1921, ibid./41/98.

130. Ioffe to Chicherin, 2 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/251; Ioffe to Chicherin, 11 March 1921, ibid./271.

131. Chicherin to Ioffe, 13 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/274; Chicherin to Ioffe, 13 March 1921, ibid./35/116.

132. Ioffe to Chicherin and Lenin, 14 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/278–279.

133. Ioffe to Chicherin, 15 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/280. Negotiations were actually concluded on 15 March. (Ioffe to Moscow, 15 March 1921, ibid./39/47.)

134. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 187; "Russians and Poles Sign Peace Treaty," *New York Times,* 19 March 1921, 3; Ioffe to the Presidium of the VTsIK, 18 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/39/50.

135. Kviring was an ethnic Volga German and a Bolshevik official in Donetsk, where Russian was mainly spoken. Kotsiubinskii was an ethnic Ukrainian hailing from Volhynia and a member of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Central Committee. (*DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 267, 564–565; K. A. Zalesskii, *Imperiia Stalina: Biograficheskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar',* Moscow: Veche, 2000, 214 and 241.)

136. This clause prompted Chicherin to inveigh against "the accursed issues of optation." He expected "with particular fear the future row with Polish optants and the innumerable and insoluble scandals unavoidable in this situation." (Chicherin to Ioffe, 28 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/103–104.)

137. For a Soviet draft of the secret annex, see AVPRF 4/32/38/56–60.

138. The Bolsheviks planned to acquire in Germany forty-four hundred locomotives and fifty thousand freight cars over the period 1921–1923, and wanted to move them through Poland. (Krasin to Ioffe, 2 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/35/106–107.)

139. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 275, 572–609.

140. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 188–192; emphasis in the original.

141. Dąbski, *Pokój ryski,* 193.

142. *Kurjer Warszawski,* 19 March 1921, report from Tallinn, 2.

143. This can be deduced from the fact that the rubric "In Today's Issue" announced, as the main item, "Comrade Ioffe on Russian-Polish Relations," but actually the article was not printed. (*Pravda,* 1 April 1921.)

144. Olshanskii, *Rizhskii mir,* 201; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 1, 3, and doc. 4, 6–7.

145. *PSS,* vol. 43, 341. The decision to introduce the NEP: Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime*, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 391.

146. *PSS,* vol. 43, 340–341.

147. As Ioffe explained in his report to Lenin and his lieutenants, the signing of the definitive peace treaty with Poland rendered any armed intervention "from the West absolutely out of the question for the time being." (*PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 246, 213.)

148. *PSV,* vol. 2, doc. 243, 200, and doc. 246, 208–209 (emphasis in the original) and 213.

149. Their sentiment was not shared by Poles hailing from territories east of the new border. The ratification debate in Parliament was interrupted by a member of the public

screaming "Shame!" and throwing leaflets protesting against "the renunciation" of these territories.

150. *SSPS,* 14 and 15 April 1921; Piotr Stawecki, "Ratyfikacja umowy preliminaryjnej i traktatu ryskiego przez Sejm Ustawodawczy," in Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski,* 116–121; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 2, 3–4. Only the Jewish parties voted against the treaty, or abstained. They were unhappy about the wording of the clause on optation, which, they argued, could be used to strip certain categories of the Jewish population in Poland of Polish citizenship.

Chapter IX. *The Implementation of the Peace Treaty*

1. *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 45, 62.

2. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 3, 4–6.

3. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 6, 9–11. In parallel to Rakovskii, Chicherin also issued a note in mid-April, accusing Poland of forming anew Balakhovich's and Peremykin's troops. Warsaw likewise showed this note to be unjustified. (*DVP,* vol. 4, 62; *Monitor Polski,* 20 April 1921.)

4. Article III of the treaty; see *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 275, 577.

5. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 8, 15–17.

6. Jan Jacek Bruski, *Petlurowcy: Centrum państwowe Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej na wychodźstwie, 1919–1924,* Cracow: Arcana, 2000, 258–263 and 295–299.

7. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 8, 16 (quotation); Karakhan to the Council of People's Commissars, 19 June 1921, TsKhIDK 461/1/155/20–25; Mieczysław Pruszyński, *Wojna 1920: Dramat Piłsudskiego,* Warsaw: Graf-Punkt, 1999, 295. On 15 May 1921, during his visit to the Szczypiorno internment camp for Ukrainian military officers, Piłsudski said publicly, "I am sorry, gentlemen; I am very sorry!" (Ibid.)

8. *SSPS,* 14 and 15 April 1921.

9. *DPPZ,* vol. 1, doc. 35, 179; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 66, 99; Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 263, 300–302, and 315–316. Bolshevik spies, for example, were among the associates of Petliura and Tiutiunnyk. (Ibid., 301.)

10. *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 69, 96–98; doc. 97, 139–144; doc. 138, 203–208; doc. 210, 312–320; doc. 223, 340–342; see also doc. 224, 342–346. Warsaw denied that the Polish border patrol service included any Cossack troops. Kumaniecki, however, holds that the Soviet charge was justified. Yet Karpus, having done archival research in this matter, maintains that the idea of employing Cossack troops was considered, but never accepted. (Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim: Stosunki polsko-radzieckie, 1921–1923,* Warsaw: KiW, 1971, 52; Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani,* 151.)

11. Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim*, 58–59; Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 302; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 210, 317.

12. Ioffe to Chicherin, 11 March 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/262.

13. Politburo sessions of 5 and 8 April 1921, RGASPI 17/3/146 and 148, respectively.

14. Quoted in I. S. Ivanov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del Rossii,* Moscow: Olma, 2002, 50, see also 47.

15. Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim,* 25–26; Francesco Tommasini, *La risurrezione della Polonia,* Milan, 1925, 137; Janusz Pajewski, ed., *Ministrowie spraw zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej,* Szczecin: PPiK, 1992, 77–78; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 89, 129.

16. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 14, 20–21 and n. 1; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 96, 139.

17. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 17, 21–22; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 149, 219–220.

18. Karakhan to the Council of People's Commissars, 19 June 1921, TsKhIDK 461/1/155/20–25; Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim,* 27; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 31, 45, and doc. 36, 51.

19. Tommasini, *La risurrezione della Polonia,* 138–139; Kumaniecki, *Po traktacie ryskim,* 27–28.

20. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 41, 57–58; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 138, 208, and doc. 210, 319–320.

21. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 43, 59; *ZZD,* doc. 76, 190–191.

22. Including allowing Poles serving in the Red Army to exercise their right to opt for Polish citizenship, ceasing agitation against the Polish state among those in the process of repatriation, ceasing legal and administrative proceedings against them, and altering all Soviet decrees regarding them that were in contradiction to the peace treaty.

23. Including altering all Soviet decrees on reevacuation that contradicted the peace treaty, and ceasing distribution of Polish property subject to reevacuation to Soviet individuals and institutions.

24. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 49, 63–65; *ZZD,* doc. 76, 190–193.

25. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 52, 68–71.

26. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 57, 81–82.

27. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 60, 85–86.

28. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 63, 94–96; Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 315.

29. Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 267–268; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 61 and n. 7, 87–92. During the Karakhan-Dąbski negotiations, Savinkov was in France for a visit. When he wanted to return to Poland, he was denied a visa. His associates in Poland reacted by refusing to leave without him. In the end, the Poles let him in and then secured asylum for him and his group in Czechoslovakia. All of this led to the delay. (Ibid.)

30. Bruski, *Petlurowcy,* 309–313; Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, 12–14. Bruski maintains that Gen. Sikorski, the chief of the General Staff, secretly supported Tiutiunnyk's venture. Snyder, however, points out that he tried to prevent Tiutiunnyk from crossing the border, and disciplined those Polish officers who helped him to do it.

31. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 71, 105–108; *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 282, 452–456; Politburo session of 27 April 1922, RGASPI 17/3/290; the quotation in Akim Arutiunov, *Dos'e Lenina bez retushi,* Moscow: Veche, 1999, 436.

32. *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 170, 251–253; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 74, 109–110.

33. Matuszewski to Sokolnicki, 7 Dec. 1921, TsKhIDK 308/12/138/7–9; *DiM,* vol. 4, 87 n. 4.

34. Jerzy Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków po wojnie polsko-radzieckiej w latach 1921–1924," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 1:1, 1991, 136; *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 267, 561.

35. Ol'shanskii claims, citing no sources, that the Bolshevik delegation to the Warsaw commission was "for a long time" prevented by the Poles from visiting POW camps. According to archival material, however, Bolshevik delegates arrived in the Strzałków camp already two days after the creation of the commission. Statements of this kind are not unusual in this Soviet-era book. (P. N. Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii dogovor i razvitie sovetsko-pol'skikh otnoshenii, 1921–1924,* Moscow: Nauka, 1974, 22–23; Zbigniew Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918–1924,* Toruń: A. Marszałek, 1997, 127.)

36. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 267, 556; Jerzy Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 137.

37. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 139. Kumaniecki also suggests that a secondary reason for the decrease was the Soviet focus on repatriating civilians from the regions affected by famine. This, indeed, could only have been a minor secondary reason, considering that the number of POWs to be repatriated as of August 1921 (4,400) was minuscule in comparison to the number of civilians repatriated at the time (195,500). (*ZZD,* doc. 79, 201.)

38. *ZZD,* doc. 79, 197–201; Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 141; Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani,* 130–131. Karpus cites a document showing that in January 1922, Warsaw was determined to repatriate the last group of Bolshevik POWs without even waiting for the remaining Polish POWs. Other documents, apparently unknown to him, however, suggest that in fact an exchange of POWs did take place in February–March 1922. (Ibid., 131; AAN MSZ/12673, 48 and especially 111.)

39. Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani,* 156–158.

40. *ZZD,* doc. 79, 200.

41. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 139; *ZZD,* doc. 79, 201.

42. *DVP,* vol. 4, doc. 177, 259; Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 139–140; *ZZD,* doc. 79, 201.

43. *ZZD,* doc. 79, 201.

44. The capacity of the Baranowicze station was increased to one thousand people a day, and that of the Równe station to five hundred people a day.

45. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 141–142; *ZZD,* doc. 79, 201.

46. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 141; AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58; ibid./12673, 85.

47. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 143; AAN MSZ/12673, 57 and 132–133. According to the Polish Foreign Ministry, Ukrainian authorities–which dealt with the technical aspect of dispatching the repatriates and were supposed to supply them with health services and food–"do their job worse than Russian authorities in Central Russia." As a result, the repatriates, waiting "helplessly" to be dispatched, "die of hunger and lack of health care." (Foreign Ministry to the Cabinet, ibid.)

48. AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58, 62–71 and 72–77. The prices charged for repatriation by provincial authorities were very substantial. For example, in Khar'kov they demanded from a three-person family 600,000 rubles for passports and travel. (AAN MSZ/12673, 75.)

49. AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58; ibid./12673, 88 and 94.

50. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 148, 225–226; Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 143; *DVP,* vol. 6, 171–173 and 276–277.

51. Litvinov to Unshlikht, cc: Molotov, Radek, Trotsky, Kamenev, Kalinin, Rykov et al., 28 Feb. 1923, RGASPI 359/1/4/162. Strictly speaking, it was not the Cheka but its successor, known as the GPU.

52. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 143–144; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 164, 245.

53. Kumaniecki, "Repatriacja Polaków," 144; AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58 and 62–71; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 160, 239–241, including the footnotes; ibid., doc. 164, 243–247; ibid., doc. 174, 259.

54. AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58, and 72–77; ibid./12674, 194–200.

55. AAN MSZ/12675, 52–58, 78 and 81–89.

56. *DiM,* vol. 4, 329 n. 1; AAN MSZ/12673, 136. According to the estimates of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities, in 1918 there were in Russia 5 million refugees

from Congress Poland and the western Borderlands, including 1.5 million Poles. In addition, numerous Poles lived permanently in European and Asiatic Russia (0.5 million) and in the eastern Borderlands (0.5 million, according to tsarist statistics; 1 million, according to Soviet estimates). One must also take into account Polish conscripts from Polish territories who served in the Russian Army (a significant part of the total of 0.6 million Polish soldiers as of 1917). (Walentyna Najdus, *Polacy w rewolucji 1917 roku,* Warsaw: PWN, 1967, 42–43 and 46–47.) Overall, in 1918, the number of Poles in Russia was around 3 million. Considering that subsequently an estimated 220,000 were repatriated to Poland, quite a few fled Bolshevik Russia on their own, and many perished in the throes of revolution, the number of those who remained may well have been 1.5 million.

57. AAN MSZ/12675, 62–71.

58. The discrepancy in the severity of punishment for apparently similar crimes resulted from the fact that, in democratic Poland, unlike the totalitarian Soviet state, political crimes could not be punished by the death penalty. (AAN MSZ/12674, 194–200.)

One should also note that in Soviet Russia it did not take much for a foreigner to be arrested for espionage. For instance, possession of a railroad map was treated as conclusive proof of such a crime. (AAN MSZ/12673, 72–73.) The Cheka itself realized that "in the provinces, foreign citizens have been arrested and imprisoned without sufficient basis." (Instruction of the Cheka's deputy head, rec. 19 Sept. 1921, GARF 5209/1/4/162 and 164.)

59. AAN MSZ/12674, 194–200, 204–205, 211–226, and 238–240; ibid./12675, 131; see also *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 133, 193–196. It appears that the Soviets refused to release the Greek Catholics as well as the Romanians and Hungarians who were on the Polish list. (AAN MSZ/12675, 92 and 118.)

60. Leon Wasilewski, *Wschodnia granica Polski,* Warsaw: GUS, 1923, 2; Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki, 1921: Geneza, rokowania, traktat, komisje mieszane,* Warsaw: IKS PAN, 1985, 122–123; AAN MSZ/12671, 23.

61. Wasilewski, *Wschodnia granica Polski,* 2–3; AAN MSZ/12668A, 3 and 47–48.

62. Wasilewski, *Wschodnia granica Polski,* 2–3; AAN MSZ/12668A, 21–22 and 23–26.

63. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 68, 100–101; Zdzisław G. Kowalski, "Granica ryska," in Mieczysław Wojciechowski, ed., *Traktat ryski 1921 roku po 75 latach,* Toruń: UMK, 1998, 135; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 124–125; AAN MSZ/12671, 4.

64. AAN MSZ/12668B, 53, 54, 56, 77–79, 83–84, and 162; ibid./12668C, 100–101; ibid./12668A, 71 and 73.

65. AAN MSZ/12668A, 74–77; ibid./12668C, 48 (the order quoted in extenso).

66. AAN MSZ/12668A, 75; Wasilewski, *Wschodnia granica Polski,* 5–6. See also AAN MSZ/12668C, 14–18, 49–50, 51–57, 95–97, 99, 127, 128–130, 138–140, 142–145, and 161–163; ibid./12668A, 53–55.

67. AAN MSZ/12668A, 8–16, 27–30, 35–37, 47–48, 53–55, and 78–79; ibid./12668B, 151–152, 177–178, 184–185, 223–225; ibid./12668C, 21–22, 28–31, 36, 38, 39, 40–41, 44–45, 49–50, 59–61, 123–124, 151–152. See also ibid./12668B, 24, 70–71, 103–104; ibid./12668C, 103–106, 153–154, 156–160.

68. AAN MSZ/12668A, 35–37, and 105; ibid./12668B, 187, 209, 320–321, and 322; ibid./12668C, 135–136, and 164; ibid./12671, 19 and 23.

69. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 125–126; Wasilewski, *Wschodnia granica Polski,* 4–5; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 140, 202.

70. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 142–143; Antoni Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich w Komisjach Mieszanych Reewakuacyjnej i Specjalnej w Moskwie do prezesa delegacyj rosyjsko-ukraińskich,* Warsaw, n.d., 7.

71. Jerzy Kumaniecki, *Tajny raport Wojkowa: Radziecka taktyka zwrotu polskiego mienia gospodarczego i kulturalnego po pokoju ryskim*, Warsaw: Gryf, 1991, 10 and 33; Piotr Wojkow, "1921–1923: Dwa lata prac delegacji rosyjsko-ukraińskiej [do] Rosyjsko-Ukraińsko-Polskich Komisji Mieszanych Reewakuacyjnej i Specjalnej nad wykonaniem Ryskiego Traktatu Pokojowego: Sprawozdanie," ibid., 100–101; quotations: 125 and 127. Voikov wrote his report for "the highest organ of the Party," presumably the Central Committee. (Ibid., 85.)

72. Julian Kulski, *Stefan Starzyński w mojej pamięci,* Warsaw: IL, 1990, 26 and 29; Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 100–101; Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 5 and 47. See also *PTsK,* 125.

73. Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 4–5.

74. Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 5–19.

75. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 145–146; Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 110, 130–131; Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 8–9.

76. Ioffe to Chicherin, 19 Feb. 1921, AVPRF 4/32/36/225; Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 116, 127, 136, and 141.

77. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 100–101.

78. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 102–103; Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 17.

79. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 103–104 and 111–112.

80. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 106–108, 111, 116, and 118–119.

81. Quotation: Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 126.

82. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 107; Ganetskii, the member of the Collegium of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, to the Soviet legation in Warsaw, 1 June 1923, quoted in M. M. Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba vakol vykanannia materyial'nykh abaviazatsel'stvau pa Ryzhskamu dahavoru," in P. I. Ladysev, ed., *Ryzhski mirny dahavor 1921 g. i liosy narodau Uskhodniai Europy: Materyialy mizhnarodnai navukova-tearetychnai kanferentsyi (Minsk, 16–17 sakavika 2001 g.),* Minsk: BDU, 2001, 63.

83. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 147–148.

84. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 90; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 148; Lorents to Chicherin, 23 Dec. 1921, RGASPI 5/1/2003/71. According to Lorents, German experts, who also played some role in the process of pricing the stones, maintained that the Soviets overpriced them by "30 to 50 percent," while the Poles priced them "laughably" low. (Ibid.)

85. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 148 and 156 (17.5 million gold rubles equaled 46.55 million zlotys); *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 217, p. 324.

86. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 95–99; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 144–145.

87. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 121–125.

88. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 149 and 125–127; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 217, 326; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 149 and 155–156. According to Voikov's plan, devised in November 1923, the Poles would recover 4.5 million rubles in total: two-thirds of it in re-evacuated property, the rest in buyouts of property that would remain in Russia. It appears, however, that his plan did not come to fruition, as it cannot be reconciled with Polish data. Most likely, it was rejected by the Bolshevik Central Committee as too generous.

89. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 128–130; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 149 and 155–156.

90. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 135–138; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 155–156.

91. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 139–143 and 149; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 149–150 and 154; for the stud's history, see its official website, www.janów.arabians.pl.

92. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 144–145; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 150 and 154–155.

93. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 146–148.

94. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 153–154; Dariusz Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury z Rosji Radzieckiej i ZSRR, 1921–1939," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 8:2, 2002, 399–400; Olszewski, *Prezes delegacyj polskich,* 19–45. The head of the Polish delegation to the mixed repatriation commission reported from Moscow in May 1921 that "Polish cultural treasures and archives are being methodically plundered." (AAN MSZ/12673, 35–42.)

95. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 150–153 and 191; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 147 and 156; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 402. Incidentally, the ultimate fate of the coin collection was rather sad—the Soviets melted 11,000 coins for precious metal, and sold or exchanged 6,500 of them; only 500 coins actually remained in the Hermitage. (Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 402 n. 48.)

96. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 147; Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 155–156; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 400.

97. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 167–171; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 392 and 394 n. 10.

98. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 157–167; *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 275, 584; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 398. The Council of the University of St. Petersburg issued a proclamation entitled "One of the Barbarities of the Twentieth Century," which described the Polish demand for the archival materials related to West Volhynia as "plunder of Russian intellectual possessions." (Ibid., 395–396.)

99. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 171–175 and 183; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 397–398. The Polish member was Dr. Witold Suchodolski.

100. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 176–180 and 186–190; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 217, 326; Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 402–403.

101. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 152 and 156; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 217, p. 325.

102. Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 182–185.

103. Matelski, "Rewindykacja polskich dóbr kultury," 403–404; Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 158; Janusz Szczepański, "Rewindykacja polskich archiwaliów w świetle traktatu ryskiego," in Wojciechowski, *Traktat ryski,* 205–207.

104. Kumaniecki, *Pokój polsko-radziecki,* 158–163; Wojkow, "Dwa lata prac delegacji," 92; *DiM,* doc. 275, 605–606.

105. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 275, 587. For the Soviet draft of the secret annex, see AVPRF 4/32/38/56–60.

106. Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba," 62; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 117, 170; *DPPZ,* doc. 45, 225.

107. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 122, 176.

108. *DPPZ,* vol. 1, doc. 48, 236.

109. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 275, 581 (Article VII of the Riga treaty); AAN MSZ/12674/3, 11–12 and 13–14; Chicherin to Obolenskii, 31 March 1923, RGASPI 63/1/535/18; Henryk Bartoszewicz, "Stanowisko Romana Knolla w sprawie przyjęcia przez Polskę notyfikacji powstania ZSRR," in Andrzej Koryn and Piotr Łossowski, eds., *Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia w XX wieku: Studia ofiarowane Wiesławowi Balcerakowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin,* Warsaw: IH PAN, 2004, 218. As of the signing of the Riga treaty, there were in the Soviet state about 650 Catholic churches and 600 chapels. By 1938, all but two, one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg, had been closed by the authorities, and all Catholic priests had been arrested. (Roman Dzwonkowski, *Polacy na dawnych Kresach Wschodnich: Z problematyki narodowościowej i religijnej,* Lublin: OL SWP, 1994, 48–49.)

110. *DPPZ,* vol. 1, docs. 50, 51 and 52, 239–242 and 244; Ol'shanskii, *Rizhskii dogovor,* 175–176.

111. Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba," 64; *SRP,* doc. 40, 123–124; *PTsK,* vol. 1, doc. 388, 248; *DPPZ,* vol. 1, doc. 53, 248; Bartoszewicz, "Stanowisko Romana Knolla," 228; Politburo session of 3 Oct. 1923, RGASPI 17/3/385.

112. *DPPZ,* vol. 1, doc. 52, 243–247; Bartoszewicz, "Stanowisko Romana Knolla," 229.

113. Quoted in Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba," 64–65; *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 265, 406–407.

114. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 294, 449; in the original: "Rien est très peu." See also Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba," 65.

115. *DiM,* vol. 4, doc. 311, 476; see also Miazga, "Dyplamatychnaia barats'ba," 66.

116. Zaleski's speech in Parliament: *DPPZ,* doc. 77, 366; "neither quarrel nor war": Piotr Wandycz and Jerzy Borzęcki, "Rozmowy Piłsudskiego z Wojkowem: Fragmenty raportów," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* 149, 2004, 22.

Epilogue

1. Matuszewski to Sokolnicki, the minister to Finland, 7 Dec. 1921, TsKhIDK 308/12/138/7–9, emphasis in the original.

2. *DiM,* vol. 3, doc. 244, 502, emphasis in the original.

3. Leshchinskii, "Theses on the Tactics of Peace Negotiations with Poland," prepared for Lenin, 29 Dec. 1920, RGASPI 17/86/214/27–30. Note that the editor of *PSV* omitted this part of the document, ostensibly because it "relates to the political situation within Poland." (Ibid., vol. 2, doc. 224, 167–168.)

4. Politburo session of 5 April 1921, RGASPI 17/3/146; that of 18 Jan. 1923, ibid./330; and that of 1 Feb. 1923, ibid./332.

5. Article 110 of the Constitution; see *DRW,* doc. 12, 94.

6. For instance, in 1922, twelve of the sixteen members of Parliament, and four of the five senators, representing West Volhynia in the Polish Parliament, were Ukrainian. (Zbigniew Zaporowski, "Polityka polska na Wołyniu w krzywym zwierciadle," *Przegląd Wschodni,* 5:4, 1999, 834.)

7. See, for example, the speech in Parliament by Bronislau Tarashkevich of 23 January 1923. He was a former member of both the Belarusian Supreme Rada and the

Provisional Governing Commission of Wilno. (*DRW,* doc. 13, 97–112.) See also Piotr Wróbel, *Kształtowanie się białoruskiej świadomości narodowej a Polska,* Warsaw: UW, 1990, 73.

8. Leon Trotsky, *On Lenin: Notes toward a Biography,* London: Harrap, 1971, 101.

9. As the Premier of Poland, Gen. Sikorski, put it on 7 April 1923: "As far as its international significance is concerned, [the Riga border] has determined a great-power-like character [*charakter mocarstwowy*] of the [Polish] Republic, and its historical role in the East [of Europe]." (*ONGP,* doc. 43, attachment 1, 147.)

10. Piotr Eberhardt, *Między Rosją a Niemcami: Przemiany narodowościowe w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w XX w.,* Warsaw: PWN, 1996, 124 including n. 84.

11. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, maps on pp. 122, 127, 129, 131, 138, 141, and 144.

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